DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 413 317 SP 037 626

AUTHOR	Leighton, Mary S.; O'Brien, Eileen; Walking Eagle, Karen; Weiner, Lisa; Wimberly, George; Youngs, Peter
TITLE	Roles for Education Paraprofessionals in Effective Schools: An Idea Book.
INSTITUTION	Policy Studies Associates, Inc., Washington, DC.
SPONS AGENCY	Department of Education, Washington, DC.
PUB DATE	1997-00-00
NOTE	120p.
CONTRACT	EA94053001
PUB TYPE	Guides - Non-Classroom (055)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC05 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Elementary Secondary Education; Excellence in Education; Federal Aid; Financial Support; Occupational Information; *Paraprofessional School Personnel; *School Effectiveness; Schools; *Staff Development; *Staff Role; Teamwork

ABSTRACT

Educational paraprofessionals can provide strong, multidimensional support for students' academic success. The first part of this book presents information on roles for education paraprofessionals in effective schools, focusing on the history of paraprofessionals as multifaceted members of the schools staff, the work of paraprofessionals, how to assess whether paraprofessionals can help, and elements of good paraprofessional practice. The second part offers an overview of 15 effective programs nationwide that employ paraprofessionals. The programs include: early childhood education, Title I instruction, Head Start, parent participation, school employee effectiveness training, site-based management, career development, and bilingual pupil services. The third part of the book profiles the 15 effective programs in detail. The three appendixes present listings of paraprofessional job titles and descriptions, profile sites and contacts, and information on Federal student aid programs. (Contains 25 references.) (SM)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

SP

ED 413 317

U.S.
DEPARTMENT
OF
EDUCATION

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

Roles for Education Paraprofessionals in Effective Schools

AN IDEA BOOK

SP937826

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Roles for Education Paraprofessionals in Effective Schools:

An Idea Book

Prepared for the U. S. Department of Education
by Policy Studies Associates
Contract EA94053001

U.S. Department of Education

[redacted]
Secretary

[redacted]
Deputy Secretary for Policy

[redacted]
Director, Planning and Evaluation Service

[redacted]
Director, Elementary and Secondary Education Division
Planning and Evaluation Service

[redacted]
Elementary and Secondary Education Division
Planning and Evaluation Service

[redacted] of this report, developed under contract with the U.S. Department of Education, do not necessarily reflect the position or policy of the Department, and no official endorsement by the Department should be inferred.

Acknowledgments

This volume was planned, developed, and reviewed in close consultation with many individuals and organizations, whose significant contributions we wish to acknowledge here.

At the U.S. Department of Education, ideas, critiques, and encouragement came from Barbara Coates, the Contracting Officer's Technical Representative; Joanne Bogart, Terry Dozier, Daphne Hardcastle, William Lobosco, Colene Nelson, Valena Plisko, and Elois Scott.

Outside reviewers provided valuable insights about what this report should address and reviewed multiple drafts as critical friends. This group included: Elsa Brizzi, Los Angeles County Office of Education; Roxanne Dove, National Education Association; Loretta Johnson and Tish Olshefski, American Federation of Teachers; Ida Love, Kansas City Public Schools; Norma Lozoya and Nancy Robles Romero, Service Employees International Union; Phyllis McClure; and Anna Lou Pickett, National Resource Center for Paraprofessionals.

Very early in the process of developing the report, the American Federation of Teachers and the National Education Association convened focus groups of practicing paraprofessionals to inform our thinking. In addition to those listed above, among the educators who made generous contributions of time and insight were, from AFT: Dorothea Bell, Marian Ceasor, Leonard Edmonds, Vicki Holmbom, Jason Jeffras, Ann Sanford, and Shelvy Young Abrams; from NEA: Barb Auditore, Melanie Baker, Teresa Bilger, Iona Halloway, Hannah Keefe, and Nancy Tombs.

These colleagues gave us the benefit of their knowledge of the field and shared their concerns about practice, and we are grateful for their help. However, the opinions expressed herein are those of the authors.

Mary S. Leighton
Eileen O'Brien
Karen Walking Eagle
Lisa Weiner
George Wimberly
Peter Youngs

Policy Studies Associates, Inc.
Washington, D.C.
1997

Contents

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY i

ROLES FOR EDUCATION PARAPROFESSIONALS IN EFFECTIVE SCHOOLS 1
- Educational Paraprofessionals: Multifaceted Members of the School Staff 1
  - A Brief History of Paraprofessionals in America's Schools 3
- Paraprofessionals and Their Work 5
  - Numbers and Assignments 5
  - Credentialing of Paraprofessionals 5
  - Role of Professional Associations 6
  - Demographics of the Paraprofessional Workforce 8
- Assessing Whether Paraprofessionals Can Help 8
  - Hard Work/Challenging Content for Students 9
  - Total Quality Collaboration among Staff 10
  - High Reliability Organizations—Zero Tolerance for System Failure 11
- Elements of Good Paraprofessional Practice 11
  - Clear Definitions of Paraprofessionals' Roles and Responsibilities 12
  - Appropriate Job Qualifications 14
  - Ongoing Professional Development 15
  - Organizational Support for Paraprofessionals' Work 20
  - Development of Effective Career Ladders 23
  - Overview of Sites Profiled in This Idea Book 24

OVERVIEW OF EFFECTIVE PROGRAMS 29
- Summary of Profiled Programs 30

PROFILES OF EFFECTIVE PROGRAMS 33
- Early Childhood Education Programs: Calcasieu Parish School District 34
- Title I Instruction: Denver Public Schools 39
- Migrant Head Start Program: Dysart Unified School District 44
- Early Elementary Education Program: Frederick County Public Schools 47
- Developing a Partnership (DAP): Los Angeles County Office of Education 52
- Parent Technicians: Norfolk Public Schools 57
- Title I Kindergarten Parent Involvement Program: Spokane School District 61
- School Employee Effectiveness Training: Washington Education Association 65
- Parent Involvement Workers: Wichita Public Schools 68
- Site-Based Management: Wyoming Public Schools 74
- Career Development Program: Albuquerque School District 77
- Career Ladder Program: Cleveland City School District 81
- Teaching Opportunities for Paraprofessionals: State Department of Education, Connecticut 85
- Bilingual Pupil Services Program: New York City Public Schools 89

APPENDIX A: Paraprofessional Job Titles and Descriptions 96

APPENDIX B: Profile Sites and Contacts 98

APPENDIX C: Federal Student Aid Programs 102

WORKS CONSULTED 104

Educational paraprofessionals, also known as teaching assistants, can provide strong, multidimensional support for students' academic success. When schools and districts provide paraprofessionals with appropriate training, instructional team support, and supervision, the academic substance and effectiveness of their contributions to students improve. Paraprofessionals can play many roles well. In some Title I programs, for example, well trained and supervised paraprofessionals supplement the school's resources and help educationally disadvantaged students reach high academic standards. In many communities, paraprofessionals serve as advocates and coaches for students and families whose status as new immigrants or migrant workers may pose challenges to students' academic progress. Paraprofessionals not only nurture the emerging social and cognitive competence of preschoolers, they engage parents in thoughtful discussions about raising healthy and academically successful children. In programs for at-risk adolescents, paraprofessionals mentor, cajole, and offer a sympathetic ear so youngsters can say no to destructive impulses and yes to educational opportunity. Paraprofessionals also contribute to adult education programs associated with school-based initiatives.

As leaders in the professional associations that represent teaching assistants have noted, poor screening, assignment, and supervision sometimes place paraprofessionals in situations for which they are not adequately trained or supported. To save money or limit turnover, decisionmakers may, for example, reassign paraprofessionals hired to promote parent involvement or monitor attendance to positions demanding different skills, such as translating lesson content or tutoring in math. The best interests of students are not served by such practices.

Those wishing to improve overall school effectiveness must first assess not the size and quality of the paraprofessional staff but rather the overall adequacy of curriculum, instruction, and organizational arrangements—the foundation of everyone's work in school. If the assessment indicates that enhancing the role of paraprofessionals is desirable, then that goal may be achieved by applying sound principles in defining paraprofessionals' assignments, by choosing qualified candidates, and by providing professional development designed to ensure solid performance.

PARAPROFESSIONALS AND THEIR WORK

Paraprofessionals account for a major segment of today's elementary and secondary school workforce. According to the National Center

for Education Statistics, more than 500,000 classroom and library assistants were employed in the 1993-94 school year, most (90 percent) in public schools. About 75 percent of all paraprofessionals work in elementary schools (compared with 57 percent of teachers). Almost half of the paraprofessional workforce is involved in some aspect of special education. A little more than 15 percent work in bilingual programs, and about 18 percent work in programs supported by Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). More than one-third work part-time.

Employment guidelines and credentialing practices for paraprofessionals vary widely across individual districts and states. Thirty-one states have established minimal standards for paraprofessionals' education and experience, and 13 states have established certification or credentialing systems.

In many districts, paraprofessionals are members of bargaining units represented by the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), the National Education Association (NEA), the School Employees Association, or the Service Employees International Union (SEIU). About 100,000 paraprofessionals belong to AFT affiliates, and almost 120,000 belong to NEA affiliates. SEIU represents more than 100,000 school employees nationwide; in Los Angeles, most of SEIU's 28,000 members are teaching assistants. Local affiliates negotiate paraprofessionals' salaries and benefits, promote work-related professional development, initiate or support legislation about credentialing standards, and establish career ladders.

Paraprofessionals are often recruited from the local school community, a fact reflected in the employment demographics. In major urban and rural areas, 60 to 75 percent of paraprofessionals are from racial and language minority groups. In the suburbs, paraprofessionals are predominantly white.

ASSESSING WHETHER PARAPROFESSIONALS CAN HELP

The experience of many districts shows that paraprofessionals can make substantial contributions to school effectiveness. However, the overall quality of the school or program setting influences the quality of the work of any staff member, including the paraprofessional. Before deciding to invest in hiring or training paraprofes-

sionals or in any other staff, educators should reflect on three questions about programmatic aspects of school success:

Do curriculum and instruction in general engage students in hard work on challenging content?

Research (Teddlie & Stringfield, 1993; USED, 1987) on effective schools has identified several factors consistently associated with student success. A key ingredient is providing high-quality lessons that engage students in cognitive activities that lead to learning (Tomlinson, 1990). Other ingredients that contribute significantly to effectiveness are safety and order, clear academic focus, frequent monitoring of student progress, instructional leadership, high expectations, and good home/school relationships, all of which support students' hard work. When student achievement is proven unsatisfactory, the schools must first question whether the curriculum and instructional practices, taken as a whole, are compatible with student needs and community expectations for academic attainment. Only if the program is sound will paraprofessionals' work have the intended impact.

In their individual and collective work, do staff members recognize their own contributions and those of others in promoting student achievement, and do they continuously gather evidence about the effects of their own performance?

Programs that could support students' academic success are often compromised by weak implementation. The performance of the instructional team may be impaired by lack of understanding of what is properly expected of them, the inability to assess their work in light of program goals, unwillingness to reject ineffective but familiar approaches, or failure to coordinate their efforts with other team members. In schools where the focus is on total quality and continuous improvement, however, paraprofessionals, along with teachers, administrators, custodians, and other staff members, take an engaged, critical stance with respect to the whole organization's productivity. Staff recognize their contribution and that of others and strive for individual and collective efficiency. In the absence of such coherence, paraprofessionals' work may not materially advance educational goals.

Do school policy and practice communicate an unequivocal commitment to ensuring every student's success and to avoiding preventable failures?

> In a recent analysis of promising educational programs, Stringfield (1995) documents their resemblance to high reliability organizations (HROs), such as the staff that oversees air traffic control towers and electric power grids. Because members of HROs share the belief that each failure is a disaster, they use interlocking task structures, deliberately overlapping roles, and a high degree of mutual accountability at every level of their operations to focus everyone's attention on success. They exhibit zero tolerance for system failure. School officials must recognize that ensuring the academic success of all students may not depend only on hiring more staff or redefining staff roles but may also necessitate a commitment to policies and practices that encourage people to protect against <u>any</u> potential student failure. Overall, before they can determine whether to add paraprofessional positions or change paraprofessionals' roles, education decisionmakers need to assess (1) the adequacy of curriculum and instruction, (2) the extent of organizational engagement, and (3) the level of staff commitment to every student's success.

ELEMENTS OF GOOD PARAPROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

Ensuring that paraprofessionals' work contributes appropriately to achieving the school's mission requires five important factors: clear definitions of roles and responsibilities; appropriate job qualifications; ongoing professional development; organizational support; and career ladders for those aspiring to be certified teachers.

Clear Definitions of Paraprofessionals' Roles and Responsibilities

Aligning diverse responsibilities, time allocations, teacher direction, and formal supervision can generate clear expectations for teaching assistants and lay the foundation for teamwork between them and their teacher colleagues. Because paraprofessionals now play many diverse educational roles, they need clearly defined responsibilities, or they risk being pulled in different directions by those who direct and supervise them. For instance, a teaching assistant whose job is to manage a computer lab may be regularly asked to patrol the halls or deliver audio/visual equipment to various teachers, leaving her assignment uncovered. Those who work closely with paraprofessionals suggest that role overload and role conflict are more often the rule than the exception.

Appropriate Job Qualifications

Concerns about the qualifications of teaching assistants were raised during the recent reauthorization of ESEA, after studies commissioned by the U.S. Department of Education found that some Chapter 1 assistants were assuming roles normally reserved for teachers. To help prevent such problems, 26 states have established specific education or experience guidelines for hiring paraprofessionals in regular education. Through the advocacy of professional associations, some paraprofessionals have called for employment standards, such as a minimum number of college credits or a minimum level of training. For example, the AFT has recommended that standards for paraprofessional licensing include: a high school diploma; district-sponsored training that includes initial preservice and ongoing inservice education; and demonstrated competency in areas directly bearing on paraprofessionals' assignments, such as instructional methods, behavior management, and child development. Associations of early childhood educators have recommended similar credentialing requirements.

Ongoing Professional Development

Awareness of the value of professional development is growing at school and classroom levels and among policy makers at state and local levels. In Title I projects that have earned national recognition for their educational quality, staff development for paraprofessionals (as well as for other staff) is sometimes a key feature, and the terms of ESEA promote this approach. The effectiveness of any professional development program is determined in part by its goals, curriculum, and structure. Developing a good training program begins by identifying which skills and knowledge are most important for paraprofessionals to cultivate. Experts recommend that professional development programs include topics that not only provide the foundation for instructional support activities but also build a shared professional language for collaborating with teachers (Pickett & NEA, 1994). These topics include: the developmental characteristics of children; learning principles and instructional strategies; classroom and behavior management strategies; school policies, legal and ethical issues, and confidentiality protection; school governance issues related to school or district practices; and maintenance of a safe and secure environment.

Professional development activities should provide a continuum of experiences, including:

- Formal orientation that sets the foundation for paraprofessionals' work. Participating as a fully contributing member in a team effort requires understanding the team's goals, the

team's relationship to the larger institution, and the ways different roles and responsibilities fit together to form an integrated whole.

- Training sessions that supplement and enhance knowledge and skill development. Paraprofessionals, like other educators, are continually learning from their practice, but their learning can be accelerated and focused at key junctures by formal professional development experiences.

- Structured on-the-job coaching in classrooms or other learning environments. Every concept and strategy acquires a slightly new shape when applied to real classroom settings and implemented with the unique skills and insights of a practitioner. Paraprofessionals, like other educators, learn best when formal training is supplemented with opportunities to reflect on practice in the company of a colleague whose understanding of a given technique or content area is more advanced.

- Opportunities for paraprofessionals to earn academic credit or enter professional preparation programs. Because the content of professional development programs often overlaps formal coursework for teachers, and because the pool of teaching assistants has been identified as ideal in many ways for recruiting new teachers, the quality, relevance, and motivational features of inservice education may be enhanced overall by links with formal education.

Along with preservice and inservice education, instructive and supportive supervision offers a noticeable boost to teaching assistants' performance. Although some paraprofessionals may lack access to formal training, they can learn from the teachers who direct their work, if time and circumstances permit. Such arrangements instill a team approach to meeting the needs of students, give teachers opportunities to groom paraprofessionals to assume new tasks, and provide teaching assistants with feedback for improving their performance. Some skills, such as tutoring students or managing their behavior, also benefit from systematic planning. It is important to note, however, that many teachers have hectic schedules that may prevent them from providing routine or consistent support. Therefore, the school system must make a commitment to support this teamwork.

Organizational Support for Paraprofessionals' Work

Roles designed for paraprofessionals should be performed under the supportive direction of a certified teacher. Effective programs and schools provide the conditions that enable paraprofessionals to learn the duties required of them, receive evaluation that helps them excel in their positions, and become more aware of the important role they play on the instructional team. Unfortunately, say those closely connected with paraprofessionals' work, these conditions are seldom found in most schools. Four organizational supports are especially useful in developing positive conditions.

First, written job descriptions provide teaching assistants and their supervisors with an explicit understanding of the assistants' responsibilities. As school improvement efforts evolve, appropriate adjustments in formal job descriptions should be made in writing so that affected staff members can determine how well a role has been filled or what further training might be helpful. Second, in productive work environments, performance assessments are conducted regularly (at least annually), based on job descriptions, and linked with professional development opportunities. Good schools and districts evaluate staff on how well they perform their assigned duties, and, if improvement is prescribed, they provide access to the appropriate inservice programs. New forms of school organization and governance have brought to light new approaches to evaluation that make a valuable addition to traditional methods. Many interviewed for this volume expressed the opinion that some form of feedback would be a welcome addition to paraprofessionals' conditions of employment. Third, involving classroom teachers in planning and delivering the paraprofessionals' inservice training ensures a better complement of their combined skills and shared expectations. Finally, teachers themselves should receive training in how to work with an assistant, to improve their efficiency and ability to collaborate.

Development of Effective Career Ladders

Career ladders, which most often support the transition from paraprofessional to teacher, are an increasingly popular strategy for recruiting qualified teachers and improving the diversity of the teacher labor force. Some programs, conducted by school or district staff, lead to salary increments and promotions within the role of teaching assistant. Others, often co-managed by districts and colleges or universities, lead to degrees and certification. Little evaluation has been conducted to determine which features of these programs yield success; however, using their own experience as a guide, those in the field recommend several strategies that reward participants' persistence and goal attainment:

- Tuition reimbursement for any course required for certification
- Stipends to cover school-related expenses (parking, books, and even childcare)
- Workshops about such topics as college enrollment, professional roles, certification test preparation, and other areas of social and academic interest
- Coursework and internships explicitly tied to job assignments
- Structured meetings for participants to solve problems and plan programs
- Occasional gatherings for the families of participants

For many paraprofessionals studying to become certified teachers, their college enrollment is a first in their families' history. Participants in such programs report that they need and want family support but that their families often do not understand the nature and extent of program demands. Programs that celebrate participants' small successes through periodic informal social events for families have discovered that such gatherings nurture family support. A few programs have even recruited additional family members through these activities.

In some districts, professional development for teachers and assistants is connected to formal education, or it can be connected at the participant's request. Recognizing that paraprofessionals are often employed at hourly rates, many schools and districts offer compensation for time spent in training, either through the provision of staff development activities during regular hours or through hourly pay or stipends.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

EDUCATIONAL PARAPROFESSIONALS: MULTIFACETED MEMBERS OF THE SCHOOL STAFF

Educational paraprofessionals can provide strong, multidimensional support for students' academic success. This Idea Book offers decisionmakers and program planners an overview of strategies that can enhance the contributions of paraprofessionals to school and classroom effectiveness. This volume begins with a summary of the history of paraprofessionals' roles in education and brief descriptions of the present workforce and factors associated with this type of work. Then we offer three approaches to thinking about school effectiveness as frameworks, to help school personnel assess whether investments in hiring or training paraprofessionals are the best way to help children reach challenging academic standards in a given situation. Following that is a review of the working conditions that can enhance paraprofessionals' ability to contribute. The Idea Book also profiles schools and programs that stimulate and support paraprofessionals' efforts to make a lasting impact on student learning. The sites featured in this section were chosen because of their exemplary implementation of academically ambitious, organizationally sound programs that provide contexts for wise use of education support personnel.

Schools and districts are improving the substance and effectiveness of paraprofessionals' work by providing them with appropriate training, instructional team support, and supervision. In a range of innovations, school improvement teams have found myriad organizational roles for paraprofessionals to play.[1]

[1] *For a list of the job classifications and descriptions used by the National Center for Education Statistics for its data collection and reporting on the work of school support staff, see Appendix A.*

Our choice of terms...

Throughout this report, we use the terms *paraprofessionals* and *teaching assistants*–briefly, *TAs*–to refer to members of the school staff whose primary responsibilities are to support instructional programs under the direction of staff who have professional certificates. As a matter of local custom or formal agreements, districts around the country use a variety of titles for those who do this work; assistant teacher, paraeducator, and educational technician are only a few. In some places, these titles refer to personnel with different ranks or levels of employment. The term "teacher aide," once widely used, now appears less often. Paraprofessionals are often considered "education support personnel" or "classified staff." The profiles in this report provide a sampling of the variety of contemporary terms and corresponding roles.

For example, many schools employ paraprofessionals as instructional assistants who help individual students during teacher-led lessons or related tutorials, gather and prepare lesson materials, and guide reinforcement and enrichment activities. In some schools, paraprofessionals facilitate communication among teachers, parents, and other community partners. Educating parents and stimulating community involvement may be important parts of their work. Some use their bilingual skills and bicultural knowledge to promote the educational development of students with limited proficiency in English. Others track absenteeism and work with families to promote regular student attendance. Specially trained paraprofessionals work in school libraries, college counseling centers, computer labs, nursing stations, and work experience programs. Many contribute to a safe, courteous, and productive school climate by supervising students in the lunchroom, in hallways, and on playgrounds. Before and after school hours, some paraprofessionals help students with homework, lead them in special interest clubs, and coach informal sports teams.

In some Title I programs, well trained and supervised paraprofessionals supplement the main program's resources to help educationally disadvantaged students reach high academic standards. In many communities, paraprofessionals serve as advocates and advisors for students and families whose status as new immigrants or migrant workers may pose challenges to children's academic progress. Paraprofessionals nurture the emerging social and cognitive competence of preschoolers and engage parents in thoughtful discussions about raising healthy and academically successful children. In programs for at-risk adolescents, paraprofessionals mentor, cajole, and help youngsters learn to say no to destructive impulses and yes to educational opportunity. Paraprofessionals also contribute to adult education or family literacy programs associated with parent involvement initiatives.

This Idea Book highlights the conditions under which paraprofessionals can contribute to children's school success. However, interviews with many educators reveal that this contribution is often compromised by limited or short-sighted program planning and implementation. Leaders in the professional associations for teaching assistants cite examples of poor screening, assignment, and supervision that place paraprofessionals in situations for which they are not adequately trained or supported. The desire to stretch shrinking budgets to meet student needs leads some districts to use assistants to do the work of certified teachers. To save money or

limit turnover, decisionmakers may reassign paraprofessionals hired, for example, to promote parent involvement or monitor attendance to positions demanding different skills, such as translating lesson content or tutoring in math. The best interests of students are not served by such practices. Avoiding these common pitfalls, the projects and programs featured in this Idea Book illustrate how educators improve overall school effectiveness by creating appropriate roles for paraprofessionals, choosing qualified candidates to fill those roles, and providing adequate organizational and professional development to ensure solid performance.

In developing this Idea Book, several themes about the work of paraprofessionals emerged. First, paraprofessionals are often neighbors familiar with the local culture that shapes children's life in the community as well as with the world of formal schooling; for this reason they can play a unique and important role in students' education. Second, paraprofessionals value job-related education, whether it is offered as an inservice program or outside coursework, and they worry when they are given assignments for which they are ill-prepared. They know that good intentions are no substitute for skill. Third, the extent of paraprofessionals' contribution is influenced by the overall effectiveness of the organization and program in which they work. Sound programs operated by well-run organizations enable all members of educational teams to make their utmost contribution. If the program does not match the needs of the students or if the school fails to take advantage of its human resources, paraprofessionals, among others, will be prevented from doing their best work.

A Brief History of Paraprofessionals in America's Schools

Over time, teaching assistants have provided efficient, cost-effective service in school settings through a variety of roles. The formal role for teaching assistants was first introduced to the nation's schools after World War II, when school leaders faced a shortage of teachers and sought alternative methods for providing education services. The first teaching assistants performed clerical, housekeeping, and monitoring duties so that teachers could spend more time on instructional tasks.

During the 1960s and 1970s, schools hired more paraprofessionals and expanded their roles as a result of demographic pressures and provisions in federal legislation such as Head Start and Title I. Further specialization of paraprofessional roles occurred after the enactment of two additional federal laws: the Bilingual Education Act and the Education of the Handicapped Act (EHA). The Bilingual Education Act's enactment in 1968 led to the hiring of

bilingual teaching assistants to address the shortage of certified bilingual teachers, a practice that continues today. Another major expansion in paraprofessional employment occurred after EHA's enactment in 1974, as schools and local education agencies struggled to provide individualized services for students with disabilities. The recent trend toward increasing inclusion of handicapped students in mainstream classroom activities will generate additional demands on paraprofessionals in regular and compensatory education assignments, as well as on those who work in special education. Paraprofessionals have traditionally been key players in Title I programs, and new provisions in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) that call for intensive efforts to increase parent involvement may also generate a demand for paraprofessionals.

State regulation also played a role in the increased use of paraprofessionals. Eighteen states mandate the employment of teaching assistants for certain programs; ten target special education programs. Early childhood education is another area in which some states prescribe the use of paraprofessionals. In Tennessee, for example, recent education reforms call for districts to hire at least one teaching assistant for every three teachers in grades K-3.

The breadth of paraprofessionals' work was documented in a 1990 study that involved 18,000 teaching assistants in Los Angeles Unified School District. Almost three-quarters of the group spent time duplicating materials—a traditional TA assignment—but half or more also reported helping with discipline, tutoring in reading and content areas, testing, and translating for parents and students with limited English proficiency.

As a result of changes in federal and state law, the duties and responsibilities of teaching assistants have expanded dramatically, but their training has not always kept pace. The pressure to provide special services and increase attention to individual needs, combined with the realities of school funding formulas, sometimes results in paraprofessionals overextending their responsibilities. Bilingual teaching assistants, for example, are often asked to assume the role of primary teacher—a role beyond their education and expertise. Paraprofessionals in compensatory education programs are often assigned to pullout instruction that they may be ill-prepared to implement. Education in conflict resolution and behavior management is seldom offered to paraprofessionals assigned to student supervision tasks. Performing their responsibilities competently is a matter of great concern to paraprofessionals; however, expanding their roles has resulted, in some cases, in mismatches between paraprofessionals' preparation and the duties of their actual assignments.

PARAPROFESSIONALS AND THEIR WORK

Numbers and Assignments

Paraprofessionals account for a major segment of today's elementary and secondary school workforce. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, the nation's schools employed more than 500,000 classroom and library assistants in 1993-94, with most (90 percent) working in public schools. About 89 percent worked as "teacher aides" and about 10 percent as library assistants. Until the 1960s, no separate count of teaching assistants was kept; in 1970, the number of assistants in public schools was almost 60,000. By 1980, the figure was more than five times larger—approaching 330,000—and the increase in paraprofessionals has continued to outstrip increases in certified teachers. The number of instructional assistants in public schools made a 45-percent gain from 1980 to 1994, compared with a 17-percent gain in the number of teachers.

Paraprofessionals are concentrated in a few sectors of education. Seventy-five percent of all teaching assistants work in elementary schools (compared with 57 percent of teachers). A sizeable proportion of paraprofessionals work part-time, a pattern that is more pronounced in private schools. In 1994, 32 percent of teaching assistants in public schools were part-time employees, compared with 50 percent in private schools. Library/media assistants were even more likely to be part-timers: 42 percent of public school library paraprofessionals worked part-time, compared with 74 percent in private schools. Almost half of the paraprofessional workforce is hired for special education programs. One researcher estimates that another 15 to 18 percent work in bilingual programs (Millsap, Moss, & Gamse, 1993). Nearly two-thirds of all districts hire teaching assistants for their Title I programs, and this accounts for about 18 percent of the paraprofessional workforce.

Credentialing of Paraprofessionals

Employment guidelines and credentialing practices for paraprofessionals vary widely across individual districts and states, a reflection of the equally broad variations in guidelines and credentialing practices for teachers. Thirty-one states have established guidelines for minimal standards in education and/or experience of paraprofessionals; in most cases, however, these guidelines simply call for teaching assistants to hold a high school diploma or its equivalent, and five states regulate only special education assistants. Although 13 states have certification or credentialing systems in place, seven of these established their systems during the 1970s and have not updated them since.

Kansas, Georgia, and Maine provide examples of credentialing systems. The Kansas system, which applies only to special education personnel, consists of well-defined permit categories that require specific levels of training and designate certain instructional duties. In Maine, the levels determined for "educational technicians"—the locally preferred term for regular teaching assistants—are based on the functions they serve, their preparation, and the supervision their jobs require. To define criteria for employment, licensing, and training for teaching assistants, Georgia's system distinguishes between "aides" performing record-keeping and some limited instructional activities and "paraprofessionals" performing more advanced instructional activities, along with record-keeping duties.

Rather than devising more formal credentialing systems, several states have designed administrative guidelines regulating the education or experience needed to work as a paraprofessional, and other states have not adopted either credentialing or administrative standards. Developing and strengthening systems for credentialing and administration can delineate the range of duties paraprofessionals perform and provide a method for recognizing and defining paraprofessionals' appropriate role in the delivery of instruction. On the other hand, formal systems that offer symbolic recognition irrespective of demonstrated competence undermine credentialing and do little for morale or effectiveness, according to representatives of professional associations interviewed for this Idea Book.

In the 1980s, the state of Maine developed a set of guidelines to assist districts in hiring "educational technicians." The guidelines, enacted into law in February 1995, lay out three levels of employment for paraprofessionals. Each level represents increased professional responsibility, determined by the technicians' functions in the school, their education and professional development histories, and the supervision required for them to perform their jobs successfully. An Education Technician III has the most authority and responsibility.

The law requires that "ed techs" participate in professional development to maintain eligibility for their current level as well as to advance to the next level. Although the state does not offer professional development activities, it lists approved sources of credit and monitors this area closely. (Paraprofessionals who hold teaching certificates are exempt from these rules.)

Role of Professional Associations

In many districts, paraprofessionals are members of bargaining units represented by the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), the National Education Association (NEA), the School Employees Association, or the Service Employees International Union (SEIU). About 100,000 paraprofessionals belong to AFT affiliates, and almost 120,000 belong to NEA affiliates. SEIU represents more

than 100,000 school employees nationwide; in Los Angeles, most of SEIU's 28,000 members are teaching assistants. In addition to these organizations, others, such as the National Resource Center for Paraprofessionals in Education at the City University of New York, provide resources to further the work of teaching assistants.

Besides negotiating salaries and benefits, local affiliates typically concentrate on promoting work-related professional development, initiating or supporting legislation about credentialing standards, establishing career ladders, educating the public about paraprofessionals' work, clarifying roles and responsibilities, and negotiating for productive employment conditions. For instance, the Washington Education Association and NEA were key partners in a consortium that developed an inservice training program for improving the communication and classroom management skills of paraprofessionals. Having a modular design, the program may be tailored to fit the needs of individual districts.

In several of the programs and sites profiled later in this volume, professional organizations developed collaborative projects that support career development. They have helped to leverage funds from several sources—state and federal agencies, institutions of higher education, and foundations—to launch new and innovative programs. In Los Angeles, Local 99 of the SEIU is a respected member of the professional partnership that created the Latino Teacher Project. Recently expanded to target additional minority groups, this project involves several agencies, universities, and funding sources in a comprehensive program of activities that steadily upgrades the qualifications of TAs in participating systems and results in eventual certification. In Albuquerque, an AFT affiliate identified a small federal program for cooperative labor/management projects—a program outside the education field—and in partnership with other education groups wrote a successful proposal increasing the education career options for paraprofessionals.

Professional associations for TAs have challenged districts to allot resources for paraprofessionals based on the priority of their mission. For example, the associations argue, if bilingual TAs are the primary resource in complying with requirements mandating support for students with limited English proficiency, then their work should be underwritten by a proportionate share of the categorical and regular funding. Some cash-strapped districts look to undertrained part-timers for help in bilingual programs, with high turnover (and, some argue, poor program quality) due to marginal employment conditions. Such strategies leave students with limited

access to learning. Some local associations have helped districts to provide the appropriate balance of full-time and part-time paraprofessional positions, with benefits and other incentives for stability. Part-time work is sometimes coordinated with both higher education opportunities for paraprofessionals and related district-sponsored activities designed to improve the pool of qualified licensed teachers.

Demographics of the Paraprofessional Workforce

Paraprofessionals are often recruited from the local school community, a fact reflected in the employment demographics. In major urban and rural areas, 60 to 75 percent of paraprofessionals are from racial and language minority groups. In the suburbs, paraprofessionals are predominantly white. Describing the paraprofessional workforce in St. Paul, the director of federal programs said, "Many of them started off as moms who were school volunteers." More than 90 percent of those in her programs were selected by building principals. In Los Angeles Unified School District, where paraprofessional workforce demographics are carefully monitored, education support personnel look like the student population: more than 80 percent minority, with about 60 percent Hispanic, 10 percent Asian, and 10 percent African American.

ASSESSING WHETHER PARAPROFESSIONALS CAN HELP

The experience of many districts shows that paraprofessionals can make substantial contributions to helping children meet challenging academic standards. However, thoughtful assessment is necessary to determine whether a particular situation warrants concentrating resources on the kinds of work that paraprofessionals do well. Educators aiming to improve student outcomes must begin by analyzing their organizational structures and programs as a whole to ensure that they have laid the foundation for success. The essential ingredients of program effectiveness have been detailed in other volumes in this series,[2] but a few key ideas are described here to underscore one point: The overall quality of the school or program setting influences the quality of the work of any staff member, including the paraprofessional. Ineffective organizational arrangements may hamper the productivity of skillful, hardworking staff. Adding staff or changing roles is not the solution to basic program problems.

Research about effective schools in particular and effective organizations in general offers three lenses for studying the resources, structures, and incentives for staff and students in any educational

[2] *Three previously published Idea Books focus on Title I schoolwide projects, extended educational time, and secondary education.*

program. Examining schools through these lenses may help decisionmakers make wise choices about staffing arrangements. First, research on schools that help students reach high academic standards suggests that one key indicator of effectiveness is the extent to which schools engage students in hard work on challenging subject matter (Teddlie & Stringfield, 1993; Tomlinson, 1990; USED, 1987). Second, the literature on organizations that continuously improve their productivity provides a pair of quality indicators: empowering staff members to participate in making decisions and monitoring outcomes, and promoting their understanding and appreciation of one another's contributions to the common mission (Bonstingl, 1992). Third, detailed analyses of productive, complex organizations that virtually always achieve their ambitious goals suggest a third indicator of school effectiveness: the shared perception that student failure due to the lack of a known or knowable school intervention is a kind of catastrophe that must be prevented (Pfeiffer, 1989). Before deciding whether and how to invest in hiring or training paraprofessionals or any other staff, educators should reflect on three questions about programmatic aspects of school quality:

- Do curriculum and instruction in general engage students in hard work on challenging content?
- In their individual and collective work, do staff members recognize their own contributions and those of others in promoting student achievement, and do they continuously gather evidence about the effects of their performance?
- Do school policy and practice communicate an unequivocal commitment to ensuring every student's success and avoiding preventable failures?

The following sections explain in greater detail how these three dimensions of schooling provide the foundation for staff and student productivity.

Hard Work/Challenging Content for Students

Research on effective schools has identified one key ingredient: high-quality lessons that engage students in cognitive activities that lead to learning (Fisher, Berliner, Filby, Marliave, Cahen, & Dishaw, 1980; Tomlinson, 1990). When student achievement is proven unsatisfactory, then schools must first question whether the curriculum and instructional practices, taken as a whole, are compatible with student needs and community expectations for academic attainment. Adding paraprofessionals or reconfiguring their assignments will not solve a problem caused by inadequate programs.

On the other hand, in schools with good programs, paraprofessionals may contribute to students' hard work and exposure to challenging content in many ways. Their efforts may support safety and order on buses, playgrounds, and hallways. Their attention may sustain task engagement, and their explanations may demystify academic assignments for students who need extra support. Their help in testing and record-keeping may provide important information about student progress that enables teachers to anchor instruction in students' existing competence. Their formal and informal contact with parents may strengthen parental support for students' learning. However, if such staff are to influence student achievement, a school must integrate their efforts into a program that promotes students' hard work on a challenging curriculum. Before diverting resources to initiate or enhance roles for paraprofessionals, education decisionmakers should ascertain that the basic school program is a good one for students.

In Calcasieu Parish, Louisiana, two programs, the Model Early Childhood Program and Starting Points, were introduced to identify and address the educational and socialization needs of at-risk preschool students through a variety of developmentally appropriate learning activities. The programs rely heavily on the skill and expertise of instructional teams, which include teachers and paraprofessionals, who are called assistant teachers.

Recognizing the important role that paraprofessionals play in supporting the educational goals of these programs, the district has developed a training program that clarifies their roles and responsibilities while improving their skills as instructional aides. Specific guidance on creating suitable learning environments and implementing effective teaching practices is provided in workshops scheduled throughout the school year.

Paraprofessionals in the two programs often work in pairs. They are periodically videotaped as they practice various instructional strategies, and they use the tapes to evaluate their own performance. Monthly workshops for teachers and paraprofessionals increase the knowledge and skills of both and enhance paraprofessionals' ability to serve as reinforcers of learning in the classroom.

Total Quality Collaboration among Staff

Among other approaches to organizational development, "total quality management" (TQM) is being used increasingly to promote organizational growth and effectiveness in schools. In particular, a TQM orientation may heighten awareness of the work of each member of the educational team by clarifying each one's contributions toward goal attainment. In schools where the focus is on total quality and continuous improvement, paraprofessionals, along with teachers, administrators, custodians, and other staff members, take an engaged, critical stance with respect to the whole organization's productivity. Recognizing the contribution that can and should be made by every participant, organization members strive for individual and collective efficiency.

High Reliability Organizations—Zero Tolerance for System Failure

In a recent analysis of promising educational programs, Stringfield (1995) documents their resemblance to high reliability organizations (HROs), such as the staff that oversees air traffic control towers and electric power grids. Such organizations rely on interlocking task structures, deliberately overlapping roles, and a high degree of mutual accountability at every level of their operations to focus everyone's attention on success. The experience of such organizations suggests that the solution to student underachievement is not hiring more staff or redefining roles but rather committing to policies and practices that encourage people to protect against any potential student failure as zealously as they would work to avoid a plane crash, in whatever ways they can. "High reliability schools" adopt staffing arrangements and programs that offer continuous support for students' productive engagement. These schools have clear goals, workable routines that cover most predictable events, extensive training that supports effective individual judgment, and well-maintained premises. They regularly evaluate procedures to ensure smooth functioning.

The Wyoming, Michigan, public schools adopted both districtwide and individual school site-based management in 1987, with a representative governance council called the School Improvement Committee at every school site to support shared decisionmaking. Other committees or teams are formed in each school as needed, including some that are unique to individual schools. From the beginning, paraprofessionals and other support staff were key players on these committees, and several support staff members have assumed leadership roles.

All district staff receive ongoing training in how to share responsibility and authority. Along with regular training for employees, the district offers participating staff issue-specific training so that School Improvement Committee members can make informed decisions.

In summary, education decisionmakers need to assess the overall adequacy of curriculum and instruction, organizational engagement, and commitment to every student's success before they can determine whether adding paraprofessional positions or changing paraprofessionals' roles may be desirable. If the school is otherwise in good health, then addressing issues concerning the effective employment of paraprofessionals could be the next step in school improvement.

ELEMENTS OF GOOD PARAPROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

The roles that paraprofessionals play in effective schools are numerous and varied. Most wear several hats in the organization.

Ensuring that their work contributes appropriately to achieving the school's mission requires attending to five important factors:

- **Clear definitions of roles and responsibilities** that align diverse responsibilities, time allocations, teacher direction, and formal supervision
- **Appropriate job qualifications** that take into account anticipated work demands and training opportunities
- **Ongoing professional development** that links with role expectations and broader program needs
- **Organizational support** that coordinates formal and informal structures to enhance their coherence and effectiveness
- **Career ladders** that nurture and sustain the ambitions of paraprofessionals who wish to become certified teachers

The sections that follow explain how these factors influence paraprofessionals' work.

Clear Definitions of Paraprofessionals' Roles and Responsibilities

Role diversity. As described in previous sections, paraprofessionals now play many diverse educational roles, depending on the needs of individual teachers and the hiring guidelines and requirements of each program, school, district, and state. Those hired for specific programs—such as Title I, bilingual education, or special education programs—more often have roles and responsibilities implicitly or explicitly defined by the program. Well-developed collective bargaining agreements also promote analysis and descriptions of positions and duties that clarify expectations. However, many positions occupied by paraprofessionals are not so clearly defined, and at times, they may be pulled in different directions by those who direct and supervise them. A paraprofessional's role may be expanded informally or in response to a crisis, sometimes without corresponding adjustments in supervision. Such situations can lead to conflict, for example, when the principal and the paraprofessional's directing teacher unwittingly request that the paraprofessional perform two tasks at the same time. In a best-case scenario, work duties have been specified to ensure reasonable accountability, and training and management systems supporting paraprofessionals are regularly reviewed and updated to accommodate changes. However, those who work closely with TAs suggest that role overload and role conflict are more often the rule than the exception.

Allocation of time. In the past, few studies focused on how paraprofessionals' time is spent. Two recent studies shed some light on this subject. Chase's and Mueller's study (1993) of general classroom assistants found that they spent more than half of their time working with individual children, often helping a single child complete a worksheet in a discussion and review activity. They spent another one-third of their time in similar activities with small groups and about one-tenth listening to oral readings from the textbook. That study found that an average of only 2 percent of paraprofessionals' time was devoted to helping students with writing exercises.

High schools in the Pittsford (New York) Central School District employ paraprofessional guidance to coordinate information about colleges for guidance counselors and students. Scheduling visits from college representatives, they distribute materials and disburse passes to students who wish to meet with specific representatives. Guidance assistants direct students and parents on how to use the district's college computer search program, and they help students fill out their college applications. Through frequent memos, the assistants keep counselors updated on college programs and scholarships.

Guidance assistants also serve as liaisons between the counseling office and Project Intervention, a countywide drug and alcohol intervention program in middle and high schools. The assistants are members of a school team that acts on notices from teachers and other concerned individuals and evaluates students suspected of having drug and alcohol problems. The team recommends action to the appropriate people, such as administrators, parents, or the students themselves. Guidance assistants report their findings on students who are under review to counselors. Before joining the team, the assistants participated in a five-day countywide training session on the detection of drug and alcohol abuse.

In addition, guidance assistants serve as liaisons between the guidance offices and the Urban-Suburban Interdistrict Project, which brings in African American students from inner-city Rochester. The assistants keep the project staff advised of student projects and of any salient issues.

For Title I programs, paraprofessionals have both noninstructional and instructional support responsibilities. Millsap and her colleagues (1993) reported that they spend 60 percent of their Title I reading/language arts instructional support time working with small groups of students and another 30 percent helping individuals. In regular classrooms, Title I assistants spend about equal time on small group and individual instructional support (49 percent and 44 percent, respectively) and the remaining 7 percent on clerical tasks. Teaching assistants also devote time to such noninstructional work as performing computer-assisted instructional program maintenance or other computer-related tasks and conducting home visits or other activities that involve parents.

Direction and supervision. According to most contracts, paraprofessionals work in coordination with or under the direction of class-

room teachers and are supervised formally by the principal. Anecdotal evidence indicates, however, that, despite legal mandates and professional recommendations, a growing number of paraprofessionals are working without the appropriate direction of certified teachers. A 1992 report (Millsap, Turnbull, Moss, Brigham, Gamse, & Marks, 1992) showed that this trend applied to Title I programs, with about 20 percent of districts reporting that Title I assistants provide instruction on their own without a teacher's close direction (up from 7 percent in 1985-86). Title I specifies that

Paraprofessionals in Wichita, Kansas, public schools operate parent involvement centers in the district's elementary schools. These Title I parent involvement workers (PIWs) increase parental participation in education by offering parenting classes, facilitating family nights, and serving as liaisons between teachers and parents.

Teachers and PIWs collaborate to determine which students need PIW assistance. The PIW contacts the student's parents and invited them to the parent involvement center, where activities are correlated with the student's classroom learning. Through telephone calls and home visits, PIWs encourage parents to participate in the activities. They also refer parents to social service agencies and health care agencies.

certified teachers have the ultimate responsibility for diagnosing instructional needs, prescribing and implementing teaching strategies, assessing learning outcomes, and supervising instructional aides—responsibilities commensurate with their professional education. Paraprofessionals, whose training does not include preparation in these instructional roles, are unable to handle such assignments as effectively. This overextension bodes ill for the quality of not only students' experience but also the work on which formal supervision would be based. That is, when paraprofessionals are required to perform tasks beyond the scope of their training, they will seem inadequate, an assessment that could lead to low job ratings. Fair and effective direction and supervision ensure that paraprofessionals' roles and responsibilities are appropriate to their positions as support staff.

Appropriate Job Qualifications

Thirty-one states have established specific education or experiential guidelines for hiring paraprofessionals, although in five of these the guidelines apply only to personnel in special education programs. Most states' guidelines require only a high school diploma or its equivalent, however. This paucity of guidelines in itself would not be a problem, say some experts, if better and more extensive on-the-job training were routinely offered.

Concerns about the qualifications of teaching assistants were raised during the recent reauthorization of ESEA, after studies commissioned by the U.S. Department of Education found that some Title I assistants were assuming roles otherwise reserved for teachers. A study of Title I programs (Millsap et al., 1993) determined that 13 percent of instructional assistants had a bachelor's degree, and 4 percent had more advanced formal education; little information is available about the educational backgrounds of the remaining 83 percent. To ensure that students in Title I programs are served by qualified assistants, Title I now requires that paraprofessionals in Title I programs have at least a high school diploma or GED, unless they are proficient in a language other than English that is needed to enhance the participation of children in Title I programs.

Through the advocacy of professional associations, some paraprofessionals have called for employment standards, such as a minimum number of college credits or minimum level of training. For example, AFT has recommended that standards for paraprofessional licensing include: (1) a high school diploma; (2) district-sponsored preservice and inservice education; and (3) demonstrated competency in areas directly bearing on paraprofessionals' assignments, such as instructional methods, behavior management, and child development. Associations of early childhood educators have recommended similar credentialing requirements.

In Broward County, Florida, local school board policy requires that teaching assistants have at least 60 college credits. However, the policy did not specify what courses should be taken, and state policy provided no guidelines on desired training for paraprofessionals. The district's vocational leaders recognized a need for program development; as a result, in 1994-95 the area's three vocational centers designed and offered an 18-week program designed for paraprofessionals.

Ongoing Professional Development

Awareness of the value of professional development is growing at school and classroom levels and among policy makers at state and local levels. Many education leaders begin by defining goals relevant to their specific circumstances, and then they apply principles of good practice to develop and implement professional development opportunities. For example, ESEA states that, when feasible, local agencies should include paraprofessionals in professional development for other educators. Where both teachers and paraprofessionals need to learn the same skills or where the paraprofessional needs a clearer understanding of the teacher's orientation in using a new strategy or curriculum, shared training is an efficient approach. In some cases, because their roles will differ, training content tailored to

their respective responsibilities will be the most useful. For instance, a schoolwide approach to enhancing climate and managing behavior may involve all staff in learning particular procedures and behavior expectations, but only a few—often paraprofessionals—will learn how to run the time-out center and how to implement special interventions. A literature-based reading program may involve all staff in developing story-telling skills, but only a few—usually teachers—will learn how to develop authentic assessments.

In Title I projects that have earned national recognition for their positive effects, staff development for paraprofessionals (as well as other staff) is sometimes a key feature,[3] and the terms of ESEA promote this approach. However, Title I paraprofessionals in general may have few staff development opportunities. Millsap et al.'s study (1993) showed that although nearly one-third of Title I teachers participated in more than 35 hours of professional development each year, fewer than one-tenth of Title I assistants did. The levels of participation reported by Title I paraprofessionals in this study are summarized below.

Levels of Participation of Title I Paraprofessionals in Professional Development

Annual Hours of Professional Development	None	< 6	6 - 15	16 - 35	> 35
Percent of TAs Participating	5%	21%	35%	30%	9%

The adequacy of any professional development program is influenced by its goals, curriculum, and structure, among other things. These dimensions of training are discussed below.

Goals. Developing a good training program begins by identifying the skills and knowledge instructional personnel need to work effectively. For all teachers and paraprofessionals, ease in communicating in standard grammatical English, ability to read and write proficiently, and a working knowledge of general mathematics are important for both completing assigned tasks and providing a model of adult competence. Some situations also call for special kinds of skill and knowledge, for example, the ability to communicate in students' home language or to show when shifting from one language or dialect to standard English is appropriate. These kinds of competence are the

[3] *For example, see the series of Effective Compensatory Education Sourcebooks published by the U.S. Department of Education.*

minimal prerequisites for employment as a teaching assistant. Research suggests that job-related preservice or inservice education for most paraprofessionals should be designed to address the following additional demands of their work (Pickett & NEA, 1994):

- Recognizing and accommodating the school policies affecting their roles
- Resolving the legal and ethical issues involved in their roles in the classroom
- Understanding the role expectations of their position relative to teachers, administrators, students, and parents
- Using effective discipline and classroom management strategies
- Observing, documenting, and reporting student behavior
- Using and maintaining instructional materials
- Using audiovisual, duplicating, and other equipment relevant to their assignments
- Providing first aid and directing safety procedures

Curriculum. For paraprofessionals to meet these demands, experts recommend that professional development programs include certain topics that provide the foundation for instructional support activities and build a shared professional language for collaborating with teachers (Pickett & NEA, 1994). Among the topics recommended for teaching assistants to study are:

- Developmental characteristics of children
- Learning principles and instructional strategies
- Classroom and behavior management strategies
- School policies, legal and ethical issues, and confidentiality protection
- School governance issues concerning school or district practices
- Maintenance of a safe and secure environment

In addition, all school staff, including paraprofessionals, should par-

ticipate in professional development activities that: help educators develop a sensitivity to and understanding of other cultures; examine the relative effects of socio-economic status and cultural factors that influence students' learning; and develop the knowledge and skills needed to recognize and build on students' existing resources and assets. Also, depending on the demands of their assignments, paraprofessionals may require more specialized seminars and workshops. Some useful topics include: (1) guidance on when to translate into students' home language rather than elaborate in simpler forms of the target language, (2) technical or scientific terms and concepts, (3) strategies for working with children with attention deficit disorders and/or drug dependency-related behavioral problems, (4) responses to violent incidents, and (5) parent conferences.

Structure. Reviews of the relevant literature (Pickett & NEA, 1994) suggest that as many as 70 to 90 percent of teaching assistants are hired without prior training. In light of the technical and professional demands of the position, preservice and inservice education ought to be regularly scheduled activities. However, paraprofessionals seldom receive either; only six states and the District of Columbia provide a formal training plan or other structure to help prepare paraprofessionals for their positions (Pickett & NEA, 1994).

What's more, the availability of training does not increase greatly once teaching assistants are on the job:

> Despite increased reliance on paraprofessionals in roles that have become more demanding, all too frequently they are the forgotten members of the team. In the 1960s and 1970s there were concerted efforts by provider agencies and two- and four-year colleges to establish mechanisms and standards for selection, credentialing, and training aimed at providing career development opportunities for a skilled paraprofessional workforce. However, beginning in the early 1980s these efforts were moved to the back burner, becoming afterthoughts in the public policy arena. (Pickett & NEA, 1994, p. 2)

Effective professional development should include: a preassessment of the teaching assistant's training needs, established objectives, an activities plan, resources for learning, and a method of evaluating the improvement in targeted knowledge and skills. Development activities should provide a continuum of experiences, including:

- Formal orientation setting the foundation for paraprofessionals' work. Participating as a fully contributing member in a

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

team effort requires understanding the team's goals, its relationship to the larger institution, and the ways different roles and responsibilities fit together to form an integrated whole.

- Training sessions that supplement and enhance knowledge and skill development. Paraprofessionals, like other educators, are continually learning from their practice, but their learning can be accelerated and focused at key junctures by formal professional development experiences.

- Structured on-the-job coaching in classrooms or other learning environments. Every concept and strategy acquires a slightly new shape when applied to real classroom settings and implemented with the unique skills and insights of a practitioner. Paraprofessionals, like other educators, learn best when formal training is supplemented with opportunities to reflect on practice in the company of a colleague whose understanding of a given technique or content area is more advanced.

- Opportunities for paraprofessionals to earn academic credit or enter professional preparation programs. Because the content of professional development programs often overlaps formal coursework for teachers, and because the pool of teaching assistants has been identified as ideal in many ways for recruiting new teachers, the quality, relevance, and motivational features of inservice education may be enhanced overall by links with formal education.

In addition, schools and districts should not only coordinate inservice training sessions with paraprofessionals' schedules but also search for innovative alternatives when the usual approaches are ineffective. Sites featured in this Idea Book and others reviewed for the project have exercised imagination and initiative in putting together training programs for paraprofessionals that meet their needs while accommodating their crowded schedules.

Utah and Nebraska are among several states that are grappling with the challenge of providing professional development opportunities to educators in rural districts, whose location limits access to urban community colleges, universities, and other training sponsors. Although state officials in Utah wanted to increase the quality and consistency of paraprofessionals' training, the state's size and its mix of urban and rural districts posed a major accessibility problem. The state's leaders decided to develop and transmit a series of televised courses to the rural sites, with most of the sites located in high schools or other school district buildings. Utah has had some difficulty in establishing the sites because many places lack the requisite technology. Nebraska faces the same problem in its efforts to supplement paraprofessionals' learning. Some of the alternatives the state is considering include: on-site group training at individual schools, an independent study course, and an interactive network on the Internet.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

One study demonstrating that well-conceived training can lead to desired results was conducted by Ida Love, assistant superintendent of Kansas City, Missouri, schools (Love & Levine, n.d.). Participating paraprofessionals were assigned to one of three groups, with all three groups expected to learn (1) reinforcement strategies for helping students develop reading skills and (2) motivational techniques. One group received 40 hours of professional development focusing on reading skills and motivation techniques supplemented with one or more follow-up coaching sessions. A second group received only the initial 40-hour course. A third group received only the forms of coaching normally offered by classroom teachers. Those in the first group used the reinforcement strategies and motivational techniques more effectively than those in the second group, who received only training. These two groups applied the techniques better than the third group, with only incidental training.

Along with preservice and inservice education, instructive and supportive supervision can significantly improve teaching assistants' performance. Although some paraprofessionals may lack access to formal training, they can learn from the teachers who direct their work, if time and circumstances permit. Such arrangements promote a team approach for meeting the needs of students, give teachers opportunities to groom paraprofessionals to assume new tasks, and provide teaching assistants with feedback to improve their performance. Some skills, such as tutoring or managing student behavior, also benefit from systematic planning. It must be noted, however, that some teachers have hectic schedules that may prevent them from providing routine or consistent support. Therefore, the school system must make a commitment to supporting this teamwork.

Organizational Support for Paraprofessionals' Work

Roles designed for paraprofessionals should be performed under the supportive direction of a certified teacher. Schools should provide the conditions that enable paraprofessionals to learn the duties required of them, receive evaluation that helps them excel in their positions, and become more aware of the important role they play on the instructional team. Comments from practitioners and others closely connected with paraprofessionals' work suggest that these conditions are seldom found in most schools. The following organizational supports can help develop positive conditions.

Written job descriptions. Written job descriptions provide teaching assistants and their supervisors with an explicit understanding of the assistants' responsibilities. (Appendix A lists some job titles and

brief definitions and includes a few job descriptions from sites profiled in this volume.) Even in cases where the duties of paraprofessionals are well defined, however, discrepancies are sometimes noted between what the job description spells out and what paraprofessionals actually do. Other discrepancies have been observed between the job description and the professional development offered to carry it out. New ideas about how to support students' attainment of high academic standards involve many staff members in shifts of roles and responsibilities. Adjusting formal job descriptions in writing creates a record to which all affected staff members can refer when determining how well a role has been filled and whether training might be helpful.

Evaluation. In productive work environments, performance assessments are conducted regularly (at least annually), based on job descriptions, and linked with professional development opportunities. Such supervisors as principals or program administrators typically evaluate paraprofessionals, sometimes with input from the teachers who direct (and observe) the paraprofessionals' daily work. According to those who work extensively with teachers and paraprofessionals, this arrangement reinforces teamwork and preserves collegiality among teachers and support staff. Good schools and districts evaluate staff on how well they perform their assigned duties, and, if improvement is prescribed, they provide access to the appropriate inservice programs.

Much like concerns voiced by teachers are reports by many paraprofessionals that they do not receive regular or constructive evaluation. Furthermore, they say, the circumstances of their employment do not support the critical, data-based reflection on their own performance that many would prefer to outside evaluation. Programs profiled in this Idea Book and elsewhere present an array of evaluation options that might be used to support assessment. For example, materials from Los Angeles County's Developing a Partnership program include a team planning feedback form to promote a critical review of teacher and paraprofessional collaboration. Other teamwork assessment forms focus on allocating time in student lessons, identifying and extending areas of professional strength, and managing student behavior. In Louisiana, the paraprofessional training component of Calcasieu Parish's program for early childhood education videotapes participants' work with children. Participants then view the tapes to document mastery of skills or the need for improvement. In an article in the *Teacher Educator*, Green and Barnes (1988) recommend using a simple checklist of low-inference

observation items so that supervisors and TAs would be provided with data relevant to discussions about the nature and content of their instructional support.

New forms of school organization and governance have revealed new approaches to evaluation that make a valuable addition to traditional methods. The message implicit in criticism of the present dearth of evaluation by both practitioners and researchers is that some form of feedback on professional performance would improve employment conditions for paraprofessionals.

Team building activities with certified personnel. Two reasons are often given for including classroom teachers in the planning and delivery of the paraprofessionals' inservice training: avoiding disparities between paraprofessionals' training and their actual experience with teachers, and enlightening teachers who have never worked with other adults in their classrooms.

Many believe that ideally, to ensure compatibility, teachers should participate in hiring the paraprofessionals who will work on their teams. However, this is not always possible, and, according to specialists in this area, the next best alternative is building the foundation for instructional team collaboration in an orientation meeting held before the paraprofessional starts work in the classroom. The Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (NREL, no date) recommends that at this meeting teachers should share information on their instructional strengths and weaknesses, pointing out areas where the paraprofessional can be of special service. As part of this meeting, or at a subsequent one, paraprofessionals should assess their own strengths and weaknesses and develop their personal expectations and goals.

Some districts allow paraprofessionals to serve on school improvement and site-based management teams. These districts report that building such representation into teams generates a more cohesive and collaborative climate for shared decisionmaking.

Training for the directing teachers. Most teacher education programs do not train teachers to direct the work of another adult in the classroom, nor do most school districts provide inservice training in this area. Thus, some teachers may feel ambivalent about working with a paraprofessional:

> At first glance, a paraprofessional in the classroom might appear to be more trouble than help. The addition of another adult in the classroom who needs supervision, support, guid-

U S DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

22

ance, and a positive role may seem overwhelming. And if the paraprofessional is new to Title I or to education, then she or he may appear to be just one more burden for an already busy teacher. (NREL, no date, p. 5)

Several professional education programs offer teacher candidates modules or courses that focus on this dimension of classroom life. However, these courses most often target special education majors because so many states mandate the use of paraprofessionals on special education teams. Regular elementary and secondary education majors are seldom taught the relevant collaboration skills.

Development of Effective Career Ladders

Career ladders, which most often support the transition from paraprofessional to teacher, are an increasingly popular strategy for recruiting qualified teachers and improving the diversity of the teacher labor force. Some programs, conducted by school or district staff, lead to salary increases and promotions within the role of teaching assistant. Others, often co-managed by districts and colleges or universities, lead to degrees and certification. Little evaluation has been conducted to determine which features contribute to program success; however, using their own experience as a guide, teacher educators recommend several strategies that support participating paraprofessionals' persistence and goal attainment:

- Tuition reimbursement for any course required for certification
- Stipends to cover school-related expenses (parking, books, and even childcare)
- Workshops on such topics as college enrollment, professional roles, certification test preparation, and other areas of social and academic interest
- Coursework and internships explicitly tied to job assignments
- Structured meetings for participants to solve problems and plan programs
- Occasional gatherings for the families of participants

For many paraprofessionals who are studying to become certified teachers, their college enrollment is a first in their families' history. Participants in these programs report that they need and want family support but that their families often do not understand the nature and extent of program demands. Programs that celebrate

participants' small successes through periodic informal social events for families have discovered that these gatherings nurture family support. A few programs have even recruited additional family members through such activities.

In some districts, professional development for teachers and assistants is or can be connected to formal education, at the participant's request. Recognizing that paraprofessionals are often employed at hourly rates, many schools and districts offer compensation for time spent in training, either through the provision of staff development activities during regular hours or through hourly pay or stipends.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Established in 1986, the Paraprofessional Personnel Training Program (PPTP) is a collaboration among California State University, Chico (CSU Chico), several community colleges, and three county schools offices. The program enables bilingual paraprofessionals serving students with limited English proficiency to earn their college degrees and teaching credentials through career ladders in their districts.

PPTP's academic program has several components, including community college and university classes, possible teacher certification at CSU Chico, and summer seminars to refine instructional skills. Program participants are placed in either community college or CSU Chico classes, depending on their educational backgrounds. Participants who need to satisfy general education requirements take these courses primarily at the community college level; PPTP staff advise students on plans of study so that all units transfer to CSU Chico.

Once community college coursework is complete, students are automatically accepted as juniors at CSU Chico through an agreement with the university. While attending, participants are advised and supported by program staff, who stress family involvement and understanding throughout the process. This support is a key resource for the paraprofessionals, most of whom work and have family responsibilities in addition to their coursework.

Once participants earn their undergraduate degrees, they enter the student teaching program, which is coordinated and overseen by PPTP. The program places participants with bilingual teachers in districts or schools other than their own to enable them to learn about new instructional settings. Participants pursue credentials at the elementary, middle, and high school levels, depending on their area of interest. The districts in which they worked as paraprofessionals hire the newly credentialed teachers.

Overview of Sites Profiled in This Idea Book

In an effort to improve effectiveness, school communities across the country have experimented with new roles, team structures, and professional development arrangements. They have devised systems whose staffing plans, professional development opportunities, and organizational cultures ensure paraprofessionals' full participation in instructional teams. The work of these communities is summarized briefly below, and is described in greater detail in a later section of this Idea Book.

The programs described here were identified with the help of many practitioners and researchers. They represent a range of school situations (including schools carrying out site-based management), program areas (such as computer-based instruction, bilingual education, and prekindergarten), training opportunities, and supervisory techniques. Although the descriptions highlight the unique features of each program or site, each was screened on a broad array of variables. Each program is working to achieve high standards of educational quality within the spirit and the letter of relevant regulations. Several of these programs have been prevented from conducting formal evaluations by budgetary, personnel, and time constraints; however, most program staff point to informal evidence of success, including improved service to underserved populations, increased participation of students and their parents in educational programs, and improved working relationships between teachers and paraprofessionals.

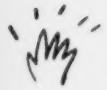
Paraprofessional Programs

Calcasieu, Louisiana; Early Childhood Education Programs: The Calcasieu School District created a series of workshops specifically targeting teachers and paraprofessionals in state-funded early childhood programs. The workshops focus on clarifying roles and responsibilities and improving instructional skills. Regularly scheduled workshops throughout the school year provide specific guidance and instruction on creating suitable learning environments and implementing effective teaching methods and practices. Through these experiences, paraprofessionals become proficient in the skills and knowledge demanded by their roles on the instructional team.

Denver, Colorado; Title I Instruction: Title I paraprofessionals in Denver's middle and high schools provide intensive tutoring in reading for identified students. Elementary school paraprofessionals work in computer-assisted supplemental math programs. Planning jointly with Title I and regular education teachers, paraprofessionals receive frequent, ongoing professional development to increase their competence in this carefully structured role.

El Mirage, Arizona; Migrant Head Start Program: Migrant parents train to work as paraprofessionals in Head Start and elementary school classrooms. Paraprofessionals receive intensive preservice training, ongoing professional development, and support to pursue further education.

Frederick County, Maryland; Early Elementary Education Program: Paraprofessionals team with teachers to plan and implement a hands-on, developmentally appropriate program for four-year-olds who are at risk of academic failure. The district sponsors professional development for paraprofessionals and teachers, and at bimonthly meetings instructional staff address issues related to early childhood education and systemic reform.



Los Angeles County, California; Developing a Partnership: The Los Angeles County Office of Education provides teams of paraprofessionals and teachers with training that makes their collective work more productive. The training is broad and applies to several types of paraprofessionals, including those who work in compensatory, bilingual, and special education, and Head Start settings. The program is now being disseminated nationally.

Norfolk, Virginia; Parent Technicians: Since 1969, the Norfolk public school system has trained and hired "parent technicians" to serve as liaisons to the community and to the parents of at-risk students. The 40 technicians plan workshops for parents, organize projects, make home visits, arrange conferences with teachers, and perform other services that support the instructional program by involving parents. At several Norfolk schools, parent technicians run Parent Centers that house circulating collections of resource materials and offer workshops.

Spokane, Washington; Title I Kindergarten Parent Involvement Program: Since 1974, the Spokane School District has worked with the parents of Title I students to provide home-based instruction to kindergarten students. Because the program is based on the concept that early intervention will improve students' basic skills, the district hires and trains paraprofessionals who serve as liaisons between schools and families. These paraprofessionals conduct 40-minute home visits each week to show parents how to read to their children and how to play educational games with them.

Washington State; School Employee Effectiveness Training: School Employee Effectiveness (SEE) training focuses on improving the communication and problem-solving skills of paraprofessionals and other school support staff. Sponsored by a consortium of agencies that includes the Washington

Education Association and the National Education Association, SEE offers 3- to 50-hour training modules, on contract with schools and school districts. The sessions are co-taught by a certified employee (a teacher or counselor) and a classified employee (a paraprofessional or other support staff), and they are tailored to meet the needs of the sponsoring districts. Typical SEE classes teach paraprofessionals how to reduce arguments among students, remain positive about student learning and behavior, solve problems with students and other staff members, use humor and nonverbal communication effectively, and initiate change leading to greater efficacy.

Wichita, Kansas; Title I Parent Involvement Workers: Title I-funded parent involvement specialists work in the Wichita Public Schools. They serve a variety of functions, linking families with schools and with social services. They receive ongoing professional development sponsored by the school system and social service agencies.

Wyoming, Michigan; Site-Based Management: To promote collegial relations among district employees, the school system implemented both districtwide and individual school site-based decisionmaking in 1990. Each school has its own governance council, which operates using a shared decisionmaking model. The district ensured that paraprofessionals and other support staff were included in governance from the beginning, and several types of education support personnel—including a teaching assistant—have assumed leadership roles in the school councils. In addition, recognizing that paraprofessionals and other support staff sacrifice their spare time to participate in the councils, the district offers a $200 stipend to any nonadministrative staff who participate.

Paraprofessional-to-Teacher Career Ladder Programs

Albuquerque, New Mexico; Career Development Program: Since January 1991, the Albuquerque School District has awarded $5,000 scholarships to five educational assistants each semester to take University of New Mexico courses leading to teacher certification. The program is sponsored by a consortium that includes professional associations as well as the district and university. Assistants are given leave from the district to attend classes, and, when they are finished, they may return to their original jobs if teacher openings are not immediately available.

Cleveland, Ohio; Career Ladder Program: The Career Ladder program's three components—job targets, tuition reimbursement, and training—lead to a bachelor's degree and teaching certification for paraprofessionals. Providing up to $1,000 to pay for courses at any college or university, the district also hires consultants to provide inservice training to the group. Participants develop and implement classroom projects—called job targets—related to their professional programs and school assignments. Paraprofessionals who become certified teachers are credited with a half year's experience for each year they have served in the classroom as assistants, moving them automatically up the district's salary scale when they join the faculty.

Connecticut Department of Education; Teaching Opportunities for Paraprofessionals (TOP): TOP aims to increase the pool of certified minority teachers in Connecticut's urban districts through a tuition-grant program that sends paraprofessionals to school full time while they continue to receive their district-paid salaries. The state also pays for a replacement paraprofessional. TOP participants receive ongoing support and professional development through their districts, universities, and the TOP program.

New York, New York; Bilingual Pupil Services Program: For more than 20 years, the Bilingual Pupil Services Program has enabled college students to intern as paraprofessionals in bilingual classrooms while they earn their teaching certification and college degrees. Interns work with a cooperating teacher in first- through sixth-grade classrooms in schools where a significant number of students speak Spanish, Haitian Creole, or Chinese. Besides helping with instruction four or five days each week, interns attend weekly and monthly workshops.

OVERVIEW OF EFFECTIVE PROGRAMS

Fifteen programs that employ paraprofessionals are profiled in the next section. The profile sites were selected because they are innovative and they incorporate sound practices as described by research. The first group focuses on the work of paraprofessionals, and the second group includes programs that offer paraprofessionals work-related opportunities to qualify for teacher certification.

<u>Paraprofessional Programs</u>

Calcasieu Parish, Louisiana; Early Childhood Education Programs
Denver, Colorado; Title I Instruction
El Mirage, Arizona; Migrant Head Start Program
Frederick County, Maryland; Early Elementary Education Program
Los Angeles County, California; Developing a Partnership
Norfolk, Virginia; Parent Technicians
Spokane, Washington; Title I Kindergarten Parent Involvement Program
Washington State; School Employee Effectiveness Training
Wichita, Kansas; Title I Parent Involvement Workers
Wyoming, Michigan; Site-Based Management

<u>Paraprofessional-to-Teacher Career Ladder Programs</u>

Albuquerque, New Mexico; Career Development Program
Cleveland, Ohio; Career Ladder Program
Connecticut Department of Education; Teaching Opportunities for Paraprofessionals
New York, New York; Bilingual Pupil Services Program

The exhibit on the following pages presents an overview of the programs.

Summary of Profiled Programs

Program Name	Location	Population Served	Program Focus
Paraprofessional Programs			
Early Childhood Education Programs	Calcasieu Parish, Louisiana	Student population is 55 percent white, 35 percent African American, 10 percent "other"	Two programs, funded through Title I, pair teachers and paraprofessionals to promote language development in four- and five-year-olds
Title I Instruction	Denver, Colorado	Two-thirds of the district's students are minority—primarily African American and Hispanic	Two of the main programs funded through Title I include supplemental math and intensive tutoring in reading; paraprofessionals assist in computer-aided instruction and hands-on activities
Migrant Head Start Program	El Mirage, Arizona	Students' parents who are migrant workers	Funded through Title I Migrant and Head Start programs, the Dysart School district offers migrant parents training to become peer mentors, kindergarten paraprofessionals, and parent trainers
Early Elementary Education Program	Frederick County, Maryland	"At-risk" four-year-olds, who are often identified through older siblings enrolled in Title I or federal lunch programs	Using state and Title I funds, this district-sponsored program encourages paraprofessionals and teachers to work and plan together, using a developmentally appropriate curriculum
Developing a Partnership	Los Angeles County, California	Not applicable	A professional development model, this program requires teams of paraprofessionals and their cooperating teachers to participate in training that helps clarify relationships and distribute instructional duties appropriately
Parent Technicians	Norfolk, Virginia	Parents of at-risk students	The district hires and trains "parent technicians" to serve as community liaisons, who plan workshops, organize projects, visit homes, arrange conferences with teachers, and in several schools run Parent Centers

Program Name	Location	Population Served	Program Focus
Title I Kindergarten Parent Involvement Program	Spokane, Washington	Kindergarten students and their parents; overall student population is about 11 percent minority, and almost half receive free or reduced-price lunches	Paraprofessionals observe students in the classroom, meet with teachers to discuss students' needs, and visit students' homes to show parents the importance of reading to their children and playing educational games
School Employee Effectiveness Training	Washington State	Not applicable	The Washington Education Association offers this training program, which focuses on improving communication and problem-solving skills of paraprofessionals and other support staff, through contracts with schools and districts
Title I Parent Involvement Workers	Wichita, Kansas	Parents of students; overall student composition is 61 percent white, 22 percent African American, 10 percent Hispanic, 5 percent Asian, and 2 percent American Indian; almost half of the students receive free or reduced-price lunches	More than one-third of the district's elementary schools employ paraprofessionals as parent involvement workers, who operate parent resource centers at the school and reach out to draw parents into partnerships with teachers
Site-Based Management	Wyoming, Michigan	The district student population is 14 percent minority, and one-quarter of students receive free or reduced-price lunches	The district has adopted both districtwide and individual school site-based decisionmaking and ensured that paraprofessionals and other support personnel are included on the councils; all council members receive ongoing training covering such topics as overall school operations, basic management concepts, federal education policies, and cultural diversity

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Program Name	Location	Population Served	Program Focus
Paraprofessional-to-Teacher Career Ladder Programs			
Career Development Program	Albuquerque, New Mexico	Not applicable	The school district offers $5,000 scholarships to five educational assistants each semester to take University of New Mexico courses leading to teacher certification
Career Ladder Program	Cleveland, Ohio	Not applicable	This district-sponsored program has three components: job targets, tuition reimbursement, and training, which lead to a bachelor's degree and teaching certification
Teaching Opportunities for Paraprofessionals	Connecticut Department of Education	Not applicable	This state program aims to increase the pool of certified minority teachers in Connecticut's urban districts through a tuition grant program that sends paraprofessionals to school full time while they continue to receive their district-paid salaries
Bilingual Pupil Services Program	New York, New York	Not applicable	In this program, college students intern as paraprofessionals in bilingual classrooms while they earn their teaching certification and college degrees

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Profiles of Effective Programs

Early Childhood Education Programs
Calcasieu Parish School District
Lake Charles, Louisiana

Professional Development: A Key Ingredient of Success

- Paraprofessionals and teachers train together
- Paraprofessionals' roles are clearly defined
- Training is program-specific

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OVERVIEW

Allison has been working as a paraprofessional in an early childhood education program in Calcasieu Parish for two years. When she first began working in the classroom, she felt awkward and unsure of her specific role and responsibilities. In fact, she and the classroom teacher both found it difficult to coordinate their activities. Fortunately, the district addressed this problem by providing them with a series of staff training sessions. In addition, Allison got to observe a more experienced paraprofessional at another school for a day. As a result of these experiences, Allison and the classroom teacher now work together efficiently and effectively as a team.

During the past ten years, the state of Louisiana has implemented two important early childhood education programs. The Model Early Childhood Program was introduced in 1985 to school districts around the state. This program seeks to identify and address the educational and socialization needs of at-risk preschool students through a variety of developmentally appropriate learning activities. The second program, Starting Points, was introduced in 1992. The two programs, which rely heavily on the skill and expertise of both paraprofessionals and teachers for their success, are almost identical in their structure and in their curricular and instructional content. Calcasieu Parish has implemented both the Model Early Childhood Program and Starting Points.

DISTRICT CONTEXT

The Calcasieu Parish School District is located in southwestern Louisiana, near the Texas border and close to the Gulf of Mexico. It is a suburban district with approximately 34,000 students in 64 schools. The student population is about 55 percent white and 35 percent African American. Approximately one-third of all students receive free or reduced-price lunches. There are 12 early childhood education

programs in the district's 35 elementary schools—six Model Early Childhood Education programs, two Starting Points programs, and four Starting Points-type classes funded through Title I.

Each teacher and paraprofessional team works in a classroom with 16 to 20 students. Students must be "one year younger than the age required to enter kindergarten" to enroll in either program. Because this age requirement varies from parish to parish in Louisiana, participating students are typically four- or five-year-olds.

MAJOR PROGRAM FEATURES

Through an emphasis on flexibility and creativity, the two early childhood education programs promote language development and instill a spirit of independence among very young students. Because paraprofessionals play an important role in supporting and contributing to the educational goals of these programs, the district has developed a training program that not only clarifies their roles and responsibilities but also improves their instructional skills. Paraprofessionals learn to work with teachers to create suitable learning environments and to implement effective teaching practices during regularly scheduled workshops throughout the school year.

Academic Program for Students

The two early childhood programs are based on The Creative Curriculum,[4] a framework for implementing a developmentally appropriate, center-based program for pre-K students. The framework outlines approaches for arranging and managing classrooms; it also recommends strategies for encouraging students to learn by stimulating their curiosity in the objects and activities available at each center.

Each classroom is divided into ten learning centers:

- Block center
- Computer center
- Home center
- Music and movement center
- Transportation center
- Table toys center
- Sand and water center
- Library center
- Art center
- Dramatic play center

Students spend two hours each day engaged in center-based activities. During this time they can spend as little or as much time as they want at each center. Afterwards they discuss their experiences with teachers and paraprofessionals, who lead specific activities designed to either introduce a concept or teach a new skill. For

[4] *The curriculum guide was developed by Diane Trister-Dodge, president and founder of Teaching Strategies, a firm in Washington, D.C.*

example, while visiting the library center, a student may discuss a story that was read by a paraprofessional or teacher. Similarly, the teacher and paraprofessional may introduce a group of students to the concept of measurement as they play with various utensils in the sand and water center.

Besides the centers, the two programs offer other activities that emphasize not only physical skill development but also adult-child interaction and conversation. For example, students spend approximately one hour each day in organized outdoor play designed to develop gross motor skills. Whole-class and small-group discussions and activities—which typically occur at the beginning or end of the day—are also a part of the daily routine. During these sessions, the teacher and paraprofessional can introduce a new topic of general interest to students, play a visual memory game, or teach a new skill for students to practice afterwards in the centers.

Although similar, the Model Program and Starting Points differ in some respects. For example, school districts receiving Model Program grants can determine who is to be classified as "at risk"; these districts can also set their own eligibility criteria for participating students. Starting Points receives support from a federal Childcare and Development Block Grant, and parents of all participants must meet specified income and other eligibility criteria (e.g., parent must be either employed or attending a training program).

The programs also differ in their source of funding and administration. In the past, when Louisiana's Bureau of Elementary Education administered the two programs, the state provided evaluation and technical assistance—with follow-up—to the sites. Currently, only Starting Points is administered by the Bureau, with the state continuing to allocate funds for evaluation and follow-up assistance. The Model Program is funded with money earned from the state's oil revenues and administered by the state's Educational Trust Fund. All funds are distributed directly to the school districts, with none earmarked for state-sponsored evaluation or training.

Staff Development and Training

State-level support. Each fall an early childhood education conference is held in the state; teachers and paraprofessionals who work in Starting Points and the Model Program receive training in appropriate practices and techniques to enhance the center-based activities in their classrooms. Sessions are offered on a range of topics, including room arrangement, classroom management, and assessment. Representatives from the state department of education visit Starting Points classrooms during the academic year to evalu-

ate the quality of the instruction being provided and to offer individualized technical assistance where needed.

District-level support in Calcasieu Parish. Teachers and paraprofessionals in the Starting Points and Model Early Childhood programs continue to receive training throughout the school year from a series of workshops specially developed by the Calcasieu Parish school district. The workshops were developed under the direction of the district's Supervisor of Instruction, with teachers and paraprofessionals working together to clarify the roles, responsibilities, and expectations for both paraprofessionals and teachers in the early childhood classrooms. Mutually accepted job descriptions and a scale for evaluating performance resulted from this effort.

Calcasieu Parish offers support and training for paraprofessionals in many ways. For example, the district encourages struggling paraprofessionals to observe and work with a more experienced mentor at another site. In addition, training workshops encourage paraprofessionals to work in pairs and to be videotaped in order to learn various instructional strategies (e.g., questioning techniques). Group discussions, role playing and modeling, and providing individual feedback are other important features of these training sessions.

The monthly workshops for teachers and paraprofessionals are held at the district's media center. The topics and issues addressed at these workshops reflect the goals of the district, which are to increase the knowledge and skills of both teachers and paraprofessionals and to enhance the ability of paraprofessionals to serve as reinforcers of learning in the classroom.

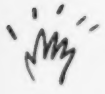
Workshops are led by district staff, consultants, and instructors from nearby universities. Some recent topics and issues include:

- Student observation guides (e.g., determining what paraprofessionals should look for and record as the teacher conducts student screenings)
- Student portfolios (e.g., establishing portfolios as a valuable means of recording progress, identifying and selecting appropriate items to be included)
- Age-appropriate materials and activities (e.g., increasing awareness of what is appropriate and inappropriate for preK students, suggesting new materials and activities to introduce in the classroom)
- Books and reading (e.g., forming strategies to enhance students' language skills as they read and discuss stories, shar-

ing these suggestions with parents)

- Working with special needs students
- Establishing good home-school relationships

Besides lectures and demonstrations, some workshops are very specific, particularly those that focus on new classroom materials. The workshops also provide teachers and paraprofessionals with new activities (e.g., songs, games) for specific centers within the classroom.



EVIDENCE OF SUCCESS

Teachers and paraprofessionals agree that one major benefit of their training is that they work more effectively as a team in the classroom. For example, before the training, some teachers complained of having to "manage" their aides rather than instructing students—a problem now resolved. Alleviating tension and conflict has contributed to a more positive learning environment for students, many of whom are sensitive to the interpersonal dynamics between the adults in the classroom.

Some teachers note that paraprofessionals have become more skilled in encouraging students' verbal abilities; in addition, the competence of paraprofessionals in other areas is quite high. District and school staff believe that, when teachers and paraprofessionals receive the same training and information, their students receive a higher quality education and a richer school experience.

Title I Instruction
Denver Public Schools
Denver, Colorado

Job-Specific Professional Development

- Career ladder rewards paraprofessionals for their expertise and experience
- Paraprofessionals and teachers train and plan together
- Paraprofessionals use computers and employ bilingual skills to promote students' success

OVERVIEW

Rosa has been a paraprofessional in the Denver Public Schools for ten years. For eight of those years she assisted Title I students through computer-based learning activities, which involved frequent professional development. After earning two years of college credit, she was promoted to the position of reading tutor at a Denver high school and given a raise in the process. Rosa now works with Title I and regular education teachers to help students with serious reading problems to write, edit, and publish their own creative stories. Professional development remains a big part of her life, and she is now considering becoming a teacher.

The Denver Public Schools offer Title I instruction to eligible students in preK-12. Paraprofessionals and teachers often team to provide instruction that is coordinated with the regular education program. The district's nine Title I-funded programs include early childhood education, developmentally appropriate kindergarten classes, elementary and secondary reading, language arts instructional assistance, elementary and secondary math, and intensive tutoring for secondary level students. Paraprofessionals and teachers receive ongoing, indepth professional development that is job-related and site-specific.

DISTRICT CONTEXT

The urban Denver Public Schools enrolled more than 62,000 children in 1992-93, 68 percent of which were minority students, mainly African American and Hispanic. In 1993-94, Title I served 12,749 students at 83 sites, including elementary, middle, and high schools; private schools; institutions for neglected or delinquent youth; and community agencies. The $14 million program choos-

es students based on their eligibility for Aid for Families with Dependent Children (AFDC); about 17 percent of all students receive AFDC.

MAJOR PROGRAM FEATURES

Supplemental Math

Fifteen schools provide supplemental math instruction for Title I students in grades 2-5. In 1993-94 this math program served 1,004 students at a cost of $1,145 per pupil, or $1.1 million for the total program. Alternating groups of ten students each attend centers where paraprofessionals and teachers team to provide direct instruction, WICAT/Jostens computer instruction, and an activity that involves manipulatives, measurement, and problem solving. The program employs ten paraprofessionals.

After careful team planning, paraprofessionals help teachers to deliver the math instruction through a 50-minute lab program. Each team serves about 60 students throughout the day in groups of ten. Although students may miss classroom instruction during this time, they are never pulled out of their regular math classes. Students who might miss too much regular instruction time in a pull-out session are offered extended-day services three or four days per week by each program.

All of the supplemental math program's objectives align with the district's curriculum. Program lessons use strategies based on the NCTM standards to reinforce regular classroom instruction. Title I paraprofessionals and teachers meet with regular teachers to coordinate instruction, and a parent component involves families in active learning as much as possible.

The computer programs offer an on-keyboard calculator, good graphics, and an audio component for students who read with difficulty. Students use computers to work on a variety of topics, including problem solving and story problems.

Because many eligible students speak Spanish at home, the program is offered in both English and Spanish through bilingual teachers and paraprofessionals. All instructional materials and software are available in both languages. The district is taking a count of migrant students, whose numbers appear to have risen dramatically since the last district census.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Thanks to the management system on the computer program, Title I staff receive detailed printouts of student work and mastery records every day. Sharing these reports with regular education teachers ensures that students with problem areas will receive support. Title I staff also regularly send summaries home to parents.

Professional Development

Each year, paraprofessionals and teachers receive about three days of training from Jostens trainers on how to use the computer system. For further training, a Jostens technical field assistant visits paraprofessionals and teachers in their own buildings. When new staff are hired, their initial training is enhanced with follow-up assistance every few weeks. Teachers and paraprofessionals train each other as well. Ongoing support for computer upgrades is provided to all teachers and paraprofessionals twice a year on every other year.

The supplemental math program is coordinated at the district office by a program manager, who provides bimonthly professional development opportunities and publishes a monthly newsletter. Meeting with teachers and paraprofessionals at the beginning of each school year, the manager polls them and identifies common concerns and interests for future staff development. She then arranges for two or three three-hour workshops per month. She or some other consultant conducts the workshops, which are focused on topics of greatest interest. Funded by Title I, these workshops are offered to participants on a voluntary basis; although paraprofessionals and teachers may receive release time to attend, some prefer to attend sessions that are offered after school. Some sessions target areas of special concern to either teachers or paraprofessionals; however, most are of interest to both. Among the topics covered in these workshops are instruction, assessment, reporting to parents, working with statistics and probability, geometry, ways to use a manipulative, and family involvement activities.

New paraprofessionals receive three days of preservice training on basic math skills, program curriculum, standards, graphing, statistics, geometry, instructional techniques, discovery learning, and educational philosophy. Paraprofessionals must pass a basic skills test at the school site before being hired.

Intensive Tutoring in Reading Project

In 1993-94, 637 middle and high school Title I students who had scored below the 20th percentile on the reading component of the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) participated in an intensive tutoring program run by 26 paraprofessionals. The program targets students whose needs are not being served by other school resources. Throughout the day, each tutor in the program works with 24 students, individually and in groups of up to five. The paraprofessionals work closely with Title I and regular education teachers on instruction-related activities with students. Tutors and students focus on reading and writing, sometimes using Apple computers to write, edit, and publish student work. They may preview content to be taught in other classes or read high-interest books, newspapers, and magazines. Some tutors work with students to increase their vocabulary and oral language proficiency. Others help students fill out job applications or other important forms. Lasting from 20 to 30 minutes, daily sessions may take place with or without Title I reading instruction, depending on students' needs and schedules. Tutors try to work with each student for at least 100 minutes each week.

A former tutor currently manages the district tutoring program. Under the direction of the Title I reading supervisor, this paraprofessional observes tutoring sessions, conducts monthly staff development sessions, and shares ideas and techniques.

Tutors meet for two days during the first week of school to update their knowledge of practices and regulations and to discuss student placement. Many tutors have been in the program for several years. Those new to the program get preservice training and frequent onsite technical assistance.

Tutors attend a monthly, two-hour afterschool workshop, for which they are paid their hourly rate. Attendance at these sessions is mandatory and referenced in the job description. Based on student needs, tutors choose professional development topics, including using a diagnostic reading inventory, responding to students' writing, administering the program's four-day writing sample evaluation, and using Socratic questioning. Although some workshops also include teachers, most are focused on tutors' needs. The program coordinator attends conferences and reads professional literature to enhance her knowledge and skills.

SUPPORT FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Hiring Practices

The district's job descriptions for all paraprofessional positions are categorized into Paraprofessional I, II, III, IV, and V levels. All level I and II paraprofessionals are hired at the building level. Formal committees advertise openings at the higher levels and use a more structured application process to identify the best candidates.

Tutor applicants for the intensive reading program are screened by the program director and the school principal. Those who have previously worked in the district are carefully evaluated. Applicants must have either two years of college credit with a background in reading or language or two years of training and experience as a classroom paraprofessional. Experienced paraprofessionals are expected to provide recommendations from principals and teachers with whom they have worked.

Issues

High turnover is a problem for the Denver Title I program. On the one hand, paraprofessionals receive excellent training; they are encouraged to take college classes, and some get into career ladders and become teachers. On the other hand, although they earn $7.50 to $9.00 per hour, they receive no benefits. Many either move to special education or bilingual programs that pay higher wages or leave the school system entirely to take jobs with benefits.

EVIDENCE OF SUCCESS

Denver uses the ITBS to track the achievement of all students in the state. Title I uses the regular classroom scores to measure program effectiveness. In the 1993-94 supplemental math program, English-language students who were tested gained an average of 7.1 NCEs on total math and 5.7 on problem solving. On La Prueba, the standardized test administered to Spanish-speaking students in the program, students tested gained an average of 13.2 NCEs. The program also uses an alternative criterion-referenced assessment; 97 percent of students achieved at least a 70 percent success rate on the WICAT math curriculum. In the intensive tutoring program, students tested gained an average of 9.7 NCEs.

Migrant Head Start Program
Dysart Unified School District
El Mirage, Arizona

Empowering Parents to Educate Children

- Program recruits parent educators from migrant community
- Training includes theory, practice, and follow-up coaching
- Professional development focuses on site-specific curriculum

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OVERVIEW

As a migrant worker, Señora J. was often apart from her extended family; she had few long-term friends with whom to share the daily challenges of parenting a preschooler. But once she moved to Dysart Unified School District's attendance area, she discovered a Head Start program that offered classes for both herself and her four-year-son. The parent classes gave Señora J. the support that her relatives were unable to provide. Furthermore, her son, formerly quiet and reserved, became a sociable little chatterbox thanks to Señora J.'s encouragement at home and his preschool experience. Now a parent trainer, Señora J. enjoys interacting with other parents in the community.

The Migrant Head Start program in Dysart Unified School District serves 75 children through federal migrant education funds and Head Start grants. Parents of children in the program may participate in training to improve their ability to promote children's development. Some parents learn to work as paraprofessionals while others learn to run the parent center. Currently, a migrant parent acts as a health care liaison, referring parents to appropriate services and testing children for health problems.

MAJOR PROGRAM FEATURES

The Dysart program features three strands of training for migrant parents. After initial training (Level I), parents work as interns in either the prekindergarten program or the parent center. More advanced training (Level II) prepares them to serve as paraprofessionals in kindergarten. Completing the third training component equips them to become paraprofessional parent trainers.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Parent Mentors

Hired by the Dysart Migrant Head Start program director, parent mentors are migrant parents who, after completing their own training, recruit and train parents both in the preschool program's curriculum and in parenting skills. Mentors work in the parent activity center, which is furnished with tables, a sewing machine, a desk, and other materials to make it comfortable and attractive. Parent mentors help parents make educational materials to use at home with their children; they also help parents plan interesting activities for their children. Parent mentors may attend continuing professional development through the Migrant Head Start program, which also includes teachers and other staff. Parent mentors are encouraged to earn GEDs and other certifications at the local community college. Some mentors have received funds from the migrant program to pursue training and education.

Level I Training: Prekindergarten Program

Having established a connection with school through the parent center, many migrant parents decide to participate in more formal training activities, taught in part by parent mentors who are graduates of this program. Originally funded through a Title VII grant, parent training is now funded through the migrant program. Level I offers participants 16 hours of sessions that focus on child behavior and development, language acquisition, and instructional techniques. At these sessions parents are encouraged to discuss their own backgrounds and real-life examples of the challenges of child rearing. Parents learn how to facilitate children's learning through talking, creative activities, and positive discipline. They also learn about the AESOP curriculum—At-Risk Educational System Organized for Preschool—a hands-on, structured program designed to maximize children's language experiences, which was developed by several local educational experts who provide intensive training to help parent mentors accelerate students' language learning. After completing Level I activities, parents can apply and sharpen their new skills by working as paid interns for two weeks in a migrant preschool or Head Start classroom, for which they receive a stipend of $96. Parents are also encouraged to pursue further education in the Parent Activity Center, where they can earn their GED or study English as a second language.

Level II Training: Kindergarten Program

In 1991-92, a $27,000 local grant from the Arizona Community Foundation, supplemented with a migrant grant, funded Level II training for selected parent volunteers to become kindergarten paraprofessionals. Parents who had completed Level I training

demonstrated their skill level through an outcomes-based checklist. Those parents who were selected received intensive training in K-TALK and K-READ, which are companion curricula to AESOP that also focus on language learning and literacy for at-risk kindergarten students.

To review language acquisition, child development and behaviors, and instructional techniques, paraprofessionals participated in about 25 hours of instruction over two weeks during December 1991. Sometimes meeting with the cooperating teachers, paraprofessionals clarified their roles in implementing K-TALK and K-READ. Once they completed the program, they served as interns in the kindergarten classes for two weeks under the supervision of program instructors. Twelve paraprofessionals worked in the kindergarten classrooms from January to June 1992. Throughout the project, they met daily with the project coordinator to discuss and resolve problems and issues; the coordinator also met with teachers weekly to receive their input. During the daily meetings, the paraprofessionals received a mini-lesson from the coordinator on instructional techniques and ideas to use in the classroom.

Level III: Parent Trainers

Parents who preferred parent training to classroom work with students participated in a third tier of learning experiences organized by the program developers. At this level, they worked on issues more relevant to working with adult learners.

When funds ran out at the end of the 1991-92 school year, many of the participating paraprofessionals were hired by the district at other grade levels. The district now uses a new kindergarten curriculum. However, the principals involved in the project have asked for the continuation of the migrant parent paraprofessional project, an option that is being considered by the curriculum developers.

EVIDENCE OF SUCCESS

So far, more than 200 parent volunteers have learned how to support their children's education. In 1993, data showed that 90 percent of former migrant Head Start students made it through the sixth grade without failing, compared with 62 percent of non-Head Start students. An article on the program's effectiveness was read into the *Congressional Record*, and the program was commended by the U.S. Department of Education in 1993. Some parent volunteers have gone on to pursue GEDs and other certifications, including higher education degrees. Two parents who earned their Child Development Associate certificates have become Head Start teachers.

Early Elementary Education Program
Frederick County Public Schools
Frederick, Maryland

Teaming for Early Success

- Paraprofessionals and teachers plan and train together
- Paraprofessionals' roles are clearly defined
- Paraprofessionals and teachers document students' continuous improvement
- Training is site-specific

OVERVIEW

Before class begins, Mary Jo and her cooperating teacher, Sara, review the lesson plans they prepared the week before, based on a developmentally appropriate unit they wrote with preK and kindergarten colleagues. Mary Jo greets the children as they enter the classroom, and during "concept time" she spends a few minutes with a girl who seems to need extra help grasping the concept of "home." During center time, Mary Jo works with children building houses out of blocks to reinforce the "home" theme and to extend their language skills. After the children have left, Mary Jo and Sara discuss the session, making notes on individual student progress and adjusting their plans for the afternoon session with another group.

Since 1979, the Early Elementary Education Program (EEEP) has been a Maryland-state-funded program for four-year-olds. The program is based on developmentally appropriate learning, with paraprofessionals and teachers delivering services to students. It encourages educators to work and plan together in teams and to attend frequent, job-related professional development sessions. For 1994-95, Frederick received $414,918 from the state to fund 6.5 EEEP projects serving 260 students.

MAJOR PROGRAM FEATURES

Districts must agree to 12 assurances when accepting EEEP funds, which, totaling more than $11 million in 1994-95, served 8,810 students in all of the state's 24 school districts. These assurances focus on developmentally appropriate instruction, coordination with succeeding grades, parent involvement, and appropriate professional development for teachers, assistants, and principals. Few

mandates govern the program, although EEEP classes must be located in a Title I-eligible school. EEEP students must come from that school's attendance area, but they need not be "at risk."

Screening

Under a special enrollment policy that applies only to this program, Frederick County EEEP targets academically at-risk students, who are selected on the basis of low socio-economic status (SES). In the district, low SES for a student is defined as having a mother without a high school diploma. During the first two weeks in March, paraprofessional community liaisons supported by either Title I or district funds visit parents and other community members to recruit likely program candidates, many of whom are identified through older siblings enrolled in Title I or federal lunch programs. After the first round of enrollment, community liaisons repeat the process to recruit any additional students who qualify but who did not sign up for the program. EEEP holds a lottery to fill any remaining spaces.

Curriculum and Evaluation

Frederick County has a K-12 Essential Curriculum. The district's preschool administrator and teachers took seven state-defined domains and wrote their own indicators for preschool education covering the areas of creativity, social/emotional development, psychomotor development, cognition, curiosity, communication, and self-confidence. For each area, the group developed indicators based on observable behaviors.

The teacher and paraprofessional concentrate on different students each week by writing an anecdotal chronicle concerning the indicators on yellow sticky notes. Placing the notes on a class chart with a column for each area of development, the teacher and paraprofessional discuss the chart during their weekly joint planning time. Every few weeks, the team files the sticky notes for each child on an individual chart that serves as an anecdotal record that can be shared with parents or kindergarten teachers. Teams also keep portfolios of student work, selecting samples that show growth in the indicator areas.

Because the state mandates a 10:1 student-to-teacher ratio, every Frederick EEEP classroom is staffed with a certified teacher and at least one paraprofessional for every 20 children. Paraprofessionals and teachers work hand in hand to plan instruction and chart student progress, meeting at least 60 to 90 minutes per week during this joint planning time. Throughout the two-session school day,

9:00 to 11:30 and 1:00 to 3:30, they perform similar duties in the classroom, although "the buck stops with the teacher."

Greeting the children as they come in, the team conducts the opening activity and concept lesson. During this part of the day, the teacher takes the lead while the paraprofessional sits in the circle, assisting the teacher, talking with children, and providing one-on-one assistance as needed. For example, during a concept lesson on Hanukkah, when the teacher urged students to ask questions, the paraprofessional modeled the behavior by asking questions. The paraprofessional also provides another lap for students to sit on when they need reassurance. The main job of the EEEP paraprofessional is to assist the teacher with academic instruction, although some perform lunch duty when children are not in the classroom.

During center time, the teacher and paraprofessional are immersed in centers with the students. The adults work to facilitate instruction and extend language. The focus during center time is often on process rather than on product, a strategy the director of the program believes is developmentally appropriate for this age group. Teachers and paraprofessionals use the High Scope model from Michigan, which encourages children to "plan, do, review"—they plan what they will do in their chosen center, do it, and review how it went once they are finished.

Joint Planning Time

Teacher and paraprofessional teams plan together every day. At least twice a week in some schools, they meet and plan with kindergarten teachers in the building. Because both programs have two sessions each day with the same time off in the middle, joint planning time is easy to schedule. The expanded team plans instruction, discusses students and strategies, and ensures coordination between the two programs. Their joint planning also helps to ease students' transitions from EEEP to kindergarten, a stated goal of the program. During planning time, teams use a log sheet to track their discussion and activities and to file them for the principal.

Professional Development

To help paraprofessionals and teachers function as a team, the program director tries to visit at least one school each day and often sits in during the team's planning time to gauge whether the team has a good working relationship. She sometimes enhances communication between the paraprofessional and teacher.

Another strategy to help the team work efficiently is to bring paraprofessionals and teachers together as often as possible for professional development. Preschool teachers and paraprofessionals attend a voluntary afterschool meeting from 4:00 to 5:30 every six weeks; originally, the meetings were held monthly. Special education teachers or kindergarten teachers sometimes attend the same meetings to discuss such issues as inclusion of special education students or transitions to kindergarten. A focus of every meeting is situational problem solving; paraprofessionals and teachers describe to their peers how they solved a problem or issue. Some meetings have an open agenda to encourage educators to talk about the problems in their program.

Frederick County has two to three curriculum inservice days for paraprofessionals and teachers each year. However, buildings also sponsor their own professional development through site-based management funds. Curriculum inservice days have dealt with such issues as implementing small-group instruction, meeting the needs of learners, and helping students who are ready to move ahead. At these meetings teams discuss and make curricular changes and strategies.

The program director involves principals in the learning process as much as possible through curriculum meetings and workshops. For example, she led a principal workshop to help them understand what they should look for when observing center times. Encouraging the principals to meet with the EEEP teams, she informally answers the principals' questions whenever necessary.

Through a collaborative effort with several private schools and colleges in the area, Frederick County brings nationally known experts to speak on early childhood education and other topics. These meetings, which occur on Saturday mornings, deal with issues and strategies, including working with parents, reducing incidents of child-related violence, and implementing appropriate activities for young children. The state also offers workshops on early childhood education.

The EEEP program has sponsored the attendance of teams of paraprofessionals and teachers at conferences featuring such subjects as whole language instruction and instruction in music and movement.

Hiring and Recruitment

Principals advertise for paraprofessionals through the district's personnel department; they also interview and hire paraprofessionals, sometimes with the assistance of the early childhood program director and teachers. Principals evaluate applicants' experience of working with children, knowledge of early childhood development, and compatibility of their personality with that of the teacher.

Paraprofessionals must have a high school diploma or the equivalent; no further training is required for employment.

EVIDENCE OF SUCCESS

Although Frederick County does not collect data on the success of the EEEP program, district educators note that many EEEP students do not require Title I services in first grade. They attribute this to the program's early intervention strategies. In 1989 one school's program was chosen as an EEEP demonstration site. Four sites are validated by the National Association for the Education of Young Children and state certified.

A seven-year state study comparing nonprekindergarten graduates with those who completed the program found that by fifth grade the EEEP group had performed better than the nonpreschool group in all basic skill areas and that EEEP students were twice as likely to be selected to participate in gifted and talented programs. Besides having a significantly smaller number of high-risk referrals in kindergarten, the EEEP group had lower retention and special education placements through the fourth grade. Preliminary data from a new longitudinal state evaluation attest to the success of the program.

Developing a Partnership (DAP)
Los Angeles County Office of Education
Los Angeles, California

Shared Training Builds a Strong Instructional Team

- Teachers and paraprofessionals learn to coordinate instructional roles
- Shared training creates shared partnership mission
- Professional development links directly to school programs

OVERVIEW

George, a Title I paraprofessional in Glendale, used to dread coming to school each day. He knew that he had a lot to offer the students in his classes and that his cooperating teacher, Carmen, was overworked. However, she would ask him only to grade worksheets or run errands. Since they attended the workshops of Developing a Partnership (DAP), George has become a contributing member of the instructional team. Carmen plans lessons with him and shows him how to use different strategies to reinforce students' learning. Clerical work is still a part of George's life, but DAP has given George a better idea of how his duties fit into the big picture of students' academic success; furthermore, he now works directly with students under Carmen's direction. George's satisfaction in this expanded role makes him look forward to work.

Since 1985, the Developing a Partnership (DAP) program has provided training to help clarify paraprofessionals' roles and foster a positive working relationship between teachers and paraprofessionals with assistance and support from principals. More than 2,000 teachers and paraprofessionals, all DAP graduates, have participated in "training for trainers" sessions and proceeded to disseminate the program. Originated in California under the leadership of Elsa Brizzi at the Los Angeles County Office of Education, DAP expanded nationally two years ago. DAP helps instructional teams to coordinate their work more effectively, which in turn promotes students' academic success.

PROGRAM CONTEXT

DAP, a professional development framework, arose in response to the increasing demand in Los Angeles County districts for paraprofessionals to supplement the services offered by certified personnel

in bilingual, special education, and Title I programs. As roles for these essential staffers evolved in each service area, faculties began to recognize that investments in shared training could result in better teamwork and increased student achievement. DAP's basic framework, described in more detail below, helps teams to clarify their relationships and to develop skills that are common to all programs, as well as those that are unique to a given program.

MAJOR PROGRAM FEATURES

Academic Program

The DAP training consists of four three-hour sessions that provide a framework for ongoing teacher and paraprofessional professional development. The first session clarifies the roles and responsibilities of teacher and paraprofessional in the context of their school. DAP builds on a particular vision of teacher and paraprofessional. The program views teachers as human resource and materials resource managers, whose training, certification, and formal assignment enable them to diagnose and prescribe students' instructional needs. Paraprofessionals then follow up and follow through on the teacher's instructional plan. The purpose of DAP training is to increase cooperation, collaboration, and communication between the teammates, as well as to improve paraprofessionals' instructional skills.

In this initial session, participants review the recent history of paraprofessionals' roles in schools and the legal context that influences their course of action. Through discussions during the training session and homework that includes observations and analysis of classroom activities, participants develop a common understanding of the optimal ways to work together.

The second session examines students' developmental learning processes, task analysis, assessment of students' readiness to learn, and the curriculum at the relevant grade level. For example, participants might begin by brainstorming all the steps required to carry out a familiar chore, such as sweeping the floor or making a sandwich, and then arrange the steps in order. Later, they do the same exercise with academic tasks. Finally, they learn a few simple ways to determine whether students have the prerequisite skills for an academic assignment. For homework, they use special observation guides to focus their analysis of student tasks in the regular classroom.

The third session focuses on developing instructional objectives and outcomes, and aligning teaching strategies with them. After practicing writing objectives and lesson plans to accompany them, par-

ticipants review Gardner's concepts of multiple intelligences. For each type of intelligence, they learn a few forms of teaching that build on it. For example, sorting activities and puzzles may draw on logical-mathematical skill, and riddles and tongue twisters cultivate linguistic ability. Homework for this session involves teachers and paraprofessionals cooperating to create new lesson plans that use students' different intelligences to achieve objectives.

In the final session, teachers and paraprofessionals learn something about each partner's strengths and limitations and identify how they can use interpersonal and professional communication effectively to improve teamwork. Establishing some informal groundrules for their work, they define areas of responsibility that are governed by personal preference rather than by external rules. In this fourth workshop, teams create the agenda for their first classroom planning meeting. Following this last session, teams will meet weekly to communicate and plan together. This is the implementation phase of the training. This final workshop sets the stage for meeting ongoing staff development needs of the team. Instructional teams continue to attend regularly scheduled half-hour meetings for the purpose of reviewing outcomes and deciding roles and responsibilities for the next instructional steps.

Program Expansion

Training of trainers. As a result of DAP's success in schools, its authors have developed a new program for teacher/paraprofessional teams to disseminate it more widely. *Phi Delta Kappa* has published a training manual and worked with LA County to create a three-day seminar. Prospective trainers learn how to master DAP's approach to partnership. Handbooks and supplementary reading materials for teachers and paraprofessionals complete the materials that support the program.

Support for career ladders. In the Los Angeles area, DAP originators have been active members of consortia formed to improve the pool of candidates for bilingual teacher certification. For example, in the Latino Teacher Project—an aide-to-teacher program supported by school districts, several campuses of the California State University system, the University of Southern California, the Ford Foundation, and the teacher and paraprofessional bargaining units—DAP is part of the curriculum for candidates and their cooperating teachers. It has become part of a comprehensive support system now being replicated statewide.

Issues

Each of the four DAP modules must be used for the training to be most effective. Some districts take only fragments of the training modules to instruct their paraprofessionals. DAP training was developed with more than 200 content areas in mind, and using the complete program ensures that participants cover all ground, including their own assignments. Most districts train only teachers to run the training modules, but DAP coordinators recommend that training teams include both teachers and paraprofessionals.

Teachers may be reluctant to allow paraprofessionals to take an active role in the classroom. DAP helps teachers to recognize the value of paraprofessionals.

EVIDENCE OF SUCCESS

School districts across the country indicate that elements of the DAP training have been successfully implemented within their paraprofessional program. With its emphasis on the role of the paraprofessional as an instructional assistant for students, rather than as a clerical worker, DAP training ensures that paraprofessionals and teachers understand each other's roles in aiding students. As a result of the DAP training, paraprofessionals and teachers report a more productive collaboration, exchanging information about their areas of expertise and participating as a team on the school faculty. Evaluation conducted by the trainers supports these reports.

DAP training often leads schools to include paraprofessionals in professional development workshops. In DAP schools, paraprofessionals are encouraged and sometimes required to attend training workshops with teachers. Some schools bring in substitutes for teachers and paraprofessionals so that they can learn new instructional strategies. One school noted that they offer the fourth module of DAP on classroom management and team work every year to help keep teachers and paraprofessionals aware of their roles and to foster effective communication.

The DAP training nurtures a positive school climate. Paraprofessionals recognize their contributions to the classroom and receive reinforcement from teachers and school administrators. In the school, DAP helps establish paraprofessionals as members of the faculty who should be treated with respect. After DAP training, paraprofessionals often express more pride in their work and the desire to learn additional skills.

The DAP training also helps schools identify the characteristics and qualifications they should seek in paraprofessionals. One school noted that its paraprofessionals are effective in working with students and in bridging their cultural or language gaps, but they share other talents that make them valuable assets to the school.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Parent Technicians
Norfolk Public Schools
Norfolk, Virginia

Parents Supporting Parents

- Paraprofessionals reach out to involve parents in children's education
- Program uses creative strategies to link home and school
- Professional development improves paraprofessionals' skills

OVERVIEW

Last Thursday, Jane spent the morning preparing the cafeteria and taking care of last-minute details for a fathers' luncheon she planned at her school. The luncheon was well-attended, with more than 80 fathers, grandfathers, uncles, big brothers, and godparents coming to eat lunch with students. Jane, a parent technician for the last ten years, had been searching for ways to get fathers or other male relatives involved in the school, so she invited them to lunch. After lunch, she helped some parents choose books to read with their children in the Parent Center, and she made several telephone calls to arrange parent-teacher conferences and home visits.

For 25 years, the Norfolk public school system has trained and hired "parent technicians" to serve as community liaisons to the parents of at-risk students. The 40 technicians plan workshops, organize projects, make home visits, arrange conferences with teachers, and perform many other services that support the instructional program by keeping parents involved. At several Norfolk schools, Parent Centers that house circulating collections of resource materials are run by parent technicians, who offer workshops and convene meetings.

PROGRAM CONTEXT

The Norfolk Public Schools serve 36,266 students in grades K-12; about 6,000 of these students are eligible for Title I. The district has five high schools, eight middle schools, and 35 elementary schools. Thirty-six of the city's public schools participate in the program; 11 of these schools are Title I schools, ten are now Title I schoolwide schools, and 15 schools receive funding under Title VI (previously Chapter 2). In addition, two prekindergarten centers funded through Title I are served by parent technicians.

MAJOR PROGRAM FEATURES

The parent technician component of the Title I program employs 40 paraprofessionals, one assigned to each school and five to the prekindergarten centers. In the 1993-94 school year, 3,348 Title I students and their families were served by the technicians, and 4,063 students and their families were served in Title VI programs. Of the targeted students in preK-K who were served, 83 percent were African American, 15 percent were white, and 2 percent were American Indian, Hispanic, or Asian American; 39 percent of the students received free or reduced-price lunches.

History

In 1969, the district sought to improve services to Title I students. It decided to build a corps of trained parents who would work to increase parental involvement in schools and promote parents' participation in their children's education. Principals recommended individuals for the positions; most of the technicians were parents who had been school volunteers. The entire program focused on expanding the district's efforts to include parents in planning, designing, implementing, and evaluating Title I programs for students.

Participant Selection

In Title I schools, parent technicians are assigned to the Title I instructional teachers, and their services target Title I students and their parents. In Title I schoolwide projects, parent technicians serve all students and their families. In schools where the program is funded through Title VI, the technicians work with at-risk students (identified through academic and poverty indicators) and their families.

Interaction with Teachers

In schoolwide projects, parent technicians confer regularly with all classroom teachers regarding students' and parents' needs. Parent technicians in non-schoolwide projects meet with Title I teachers on a regular basis—usually daily—although the frequency varies with the needs of students and families. Daily meetings are also scheduled with counselors and principals.

Activities

On an average day, a technician might spend time in a wide range of activities, including:

- Planning

- Arranging parent-teacher and other parent-staff conferences
- Delivering student performance information to parents
- Recruiting parents for school events and communicating regularly with them
- Conducting home visits
- Organizing and conducting workshops, usually in the school's Parent Center
- Assisting with the Outreach Library
- Meeting with staff or attending staff conferences
- Performing duties as requested by principal
- Working with community agencies
- Providing a forum for parental input—e.g., conducting surveys or evaluations
- Giving tours or presentations

Parent technicians often sponsor three workshops per week at a Parent Center, with some workshops offered at night to accommodate working parents' schedules. Specific examples of the activities parent technicians have developed include:

- A six-week Families as Readers literature discussion group, in which parents work with a communication skills specialist and a Title I evaluator/disseminator to learn how to engage children in critical discussions about their reading.
- A "bus stop chat" program, in which a parent technician arranges for teachers and school administrators to meet informally with parents at the school bus stops in the neighborhood. The parent technician developed this program as a way of establishing contact with parents of at-risk children, and the technique has proven very effective in making gains with this hard-to-reach population.

Support and Professional Development Programs

The program is now directed by the district's Department of Special Projects, which offers technicians a variety of inservice options. Sessions often feature presentations from other agencies, such as Family Services of Tidewater, Children's Hospital, and the

Norfolk Community Services Board. Topics include team building skills, parent recruitment, building self-esteem, safety awareness, effective communication, and early childhood STEP training. Technicians are required to accumulate at least nine hours of inservice training per year, but they are encouraged to participate in as many sessions as they wish.

Issues

Parent technicians must be high school graduates who have related experience (voluntary or paid) working with parents "in a helping capacity." The district also requires that technicians be informed not just about elementary school activities and programs, but also about the community and its social programs. Technicians must also demonstrate the ability to organize and lead workshops and to communicate effectively with persons who have diverse backgrounds.

The salary range for the position is $9,000 to $12,000, including funds for travel expenses. A regular work-week is 32.5 hours, and technicians usually work during the school day. However, many technicians put in extra hours on evenings and weekends, and some principals have offered them a flexible schedule because of the need for this extended service.

Funding

Salaries and other aspects of the program are paid through Title I funds in most schools; in schools not eligible for the Title I program, funds from Title VI cover the program's costs. Approximate annual per-pupil costs are $88 and $76 for the Title I and Title VI parent technicians, respectively.

EVIDENCE OF SUCCESS

Each year, the district surveys parents of Title I students for feedback on the services provided (including those offered by the parent technicians). Most parents say they feel well served by the workshops, home visits, and Parent Centers. In addition, parents' survey responses have helped the Department of Special Projects tailor the program to suit parents' needs. For example, two years ago, a sizeable portion of parents noted that the workshops—which were offered during the day—were difficult for working parents to attend. Now, because the parent technicians worked with their schools to change their own work schedules, many of the meetings and workshops have been rescheduled for the evenings.

Title I Kindergarten Parent Involvement Program
Spokane School District
Spokane, Washington

Teaching Learning at Home

- Paraprofessionals and teachers plan lessons together to coordinate home/school efforts
- Paraprofessionals work with parents to support children's school success
- Preservice and inservice training keep paraprofessionals' skills sharp

OVERVIEW

Paraprofessional Mary has spent the morning observing several of the kindergartners assigned to her. After lunch, she meets with the kindergarten teacher to review the data showing which children are progressing and which need more help in the designated skill areas. In the afternoon, she visits two of her students at their homes, meeting with each child's parents. Bringing a BB Bunny puppet and book to one of the visits, she asks the child to help her collect things whose names begin with the sound of the letter b, such as a bottle, a bag, or a ball. Before leaving, Mary discusses similar games with the parent and leaves the BB Bunny book for the parent and child to read together over the next week.

Since 1974, the Spokane School District has worked with parents to provide home-based instruction to Title I students as a supplement to their regular classroom work. Based on the concept that early intervention will improve students' basic skills, the district hires and trains paraprofessionals who serve as "liaisons" to families. Conducting 40-minute home visits every week, paraprofessionals focus on showing parents the importance of reading to their children and playing educational games.

PROGRAM CONTEXT

The Spokane Public School District serves 31,800 students in 48 elementary and secondary schools, and 16 of the district's schools are considered Title I schools. In 1993-94, nine of the schools developed an extended-day kindergarten program for students eligible for Title I. The district has about 11 percent minority enrollment, with almost 45 percent of its students receiving free and reduced-price lunches.

MAJOR PROGRAM FEATURES

Currently, 13 kindergarten paraprofessionals spend their time observing Title I students in the classroom, meeting with classroom teachers, planning their activities, and conducting home visits. About 210 kindergarten students participate in the program, and each paraprofessional liaison has an average caseload of about 16 students and families. (Seventeen paraprofessionals staff a similar program for 270 Title I first graders.)

Assisting their Title I students in their regular classrooms, liaisons collaborate with the teacher to develop individual lesson plans for students that are shared with the participating parent. During the 40-minute weekly visit, the liaison provides a book for the parents and child to read together during the week and models simple educational games for the parents. Parents are expected to spend a minimum of 15 minutes each day reading or playing instructional games with children.

History

First offered in 1974, the program has changed over the past 20 years. The most significant and recent change involved shifting the program's focus from developmental skills to an emphasis on school readiness or literacy and numeracy skills. Before 1991, kindergartners were pre- and posttested using the Santa Clara Inventory of Developmental Tasks, which stressed conceptualization, language, auditory memory and perception, visual memory and perception, and visual, motor, and coordination skills. The program now uses a portfolio assessment strategy and concentrates on children's beginning skills in handwriting, numbers, and letters; it also evaluates their language development skills and their understanding of stories (early reading comprehension skills).

In addition, in the nine schools offering extended-day kindergartens, the program now includes an afternoon of enrichment activities. In these schools, Title I students attend class with other students in the morning, but they remain in the afternoon for extended-day activities.

Participant Selection

With a district-developed screening instrument, observations, and teacher referrals, kindergartners' beginning skills in numeracy and literacy are evaluated, and the 15 who show the greatest need are offered Title I services.

Home Visits

The concept behind the home visit program was that parents might prefer to develop their skills in interacting with their children at home rather than at school. Parents also are given the option of meeting with the liaison at school, and about one-third take advantage of this option. Some of these parents are uncomfortable with a liaison coming to their home, and others have schedules that make it easier to visit the school on the way from work. To encourage parents to participate, liaisons are flexible, sometimes meeting parents at their worksite. One drawback is that because the visits must be scheduled during regular school hours, working parents cannot always schedule a meeting with their liaisons.

The program emphasizes reading to children and stimulating their self-expression. Toward that goal, liaisons model the behavior that elicits active participation from the children—for example, asking children to retell the story in the book in their own words and answer specific questions. Showing parents simple games that feature common household items, liaisons focus on skills such as identifying letters and letter sounds within the content of a story, or sorting by size or color. For example, to help the kindergartner learn colors, the liaison might have a child sort a collection of buttons by color and size.

Classroom Instruction

Title I instruction is also provided to the students via their regular classroom teachers; the liaison home visits are supplemental. Services provided by the liaisons are coordinated with regular classroom instruction through weekly meetings with teachers and through classroom observation. Meetings, typically held at noon to help liaisons plan for afternoon visits, stress the progress and needs of each student. Each week, liaisons—whether at regular kindergartens or at extended-day kindergartens—spend four hours or more working with students, and another six hours preparing lessons and materials. (Extended-day programs are run by the classroom teachers and concentrate on activities such as computer games, thematic units, and field trips.)

Support and Professional Development Programs

The program coordinator provides one week of training for newly hired liaisons before they begin working with families. Additionally, each new liaison is assigned a "buddy," a more experienced liaison acting as a mentor, for the first year.

All liaisons participate in monthly professional development sessions, which are offered in two-hour blocks on Friday afternoons. (These sessions are considered part of the liaison's workday.) Topics include, for example, portfolio assessment, anecdotal record-keeping, and reading strategies. In addition, the district reimburses liaisons for some outside training opportunities, such as workshops on computer skills, literacy, numeracy, and writing.

Issues

The program has little turnover among the liaisons; four of the 30 current liaisons were hired when the program started in 1974. Several liaisons have teaching certification; the program coordinator noted that some liaisons have left to take teaching positions.

Liaisons work a six and one-half-hour day and are paid more than Title I instructional assistants, but not as much as certified teachers.

Funding

The program coordinator estimates that per-pupil costs, covered by the district's Title I funds, are about $1,300.

EVIDENCE OF SUCCESS

When the program was using the Santa Clara Developmental Inventory, participating kindergartners would typically show an increase of about eight months in developmental age during the course of a school year. Although the portfolio process is showing improvements, it is more difficult to quantify the children's progress. Program evaluations now rely partly on a parent survey. Parents rate the program highly, and some of their comments include:

> "I didn't know what they needed to know to be ready for kindergarten, and this has shown me."
>
> "I didn't know what materials to use. I didn't realize I could use things at home to work with my child."
>
> "I didn't realize asking my children questions during reading would increase their development."

In addition, some teachers and liaisons predict that younger siblings of the participating kindergartners will not need the program because the liaison's lessons make a lasting impression on the families served. However, the program has not been able to track this comprehensively.

School Employee Effectiveness Training
Washington Education Association
Washington

Improving Paraprofessionals' Communications Skills

- Professional development promotes role clarity and communication skills
- Program components accommodate site-specific demands on paraprofessionals
- Cost-effective delivery model leads to widespread use

OVERVIEW

Marianne, the Title I director in her district, contracted with Washington Education Association to provide School Employee Effectiveness training to all Title I paraprofessionals. Since the training two years ago, she has noticed a big difference in their communications skills. Paraprofessionals now often contribute information and insights at staff meetings. Also, she has noticed improved relationships between the paraprofessionals and Title I students. Marianne feels that students' major gains on standardized achievement tests last year are partly attributable to the SEE training.

Since 1991, the Washington Education Association (WEA) has offered the School Employee Effectiveness (SEE) Program, which focuses on improving the communication and problem-solving skills of paraprofessionals and other school support staff. WEA provides the training through contracts with schools and school districts; it can be tailored in length and format from a three-hour workshop to a course with five ten-hour modules.

In sessions co-taught by a certified employee (a teacher or counselor) and a classified employee (a paraprofessional or other support staff), SEE focuses on teaching paraprofessionals how to: (1) reduce the rate of arguments among students, (2) sustain a positive attitude about student learning and behavior, (3) solve problems with students and other staff members, (4) use humor and nonverbal communication to facilitate student learning, and (5) initiate change that leads to greater efficacy.

PROGRAM CONTEXT

Paraprofessionals are well organized in Washington, with more than 10,000 members in the Washington Education Association. In response to paraprofessionals' needs, WEA developed the SEE program. SEE was modeled to resemble a typical college course, with participants who complete all five ten-hour modules receiving five college credits or five clock hours toward their professional development. However, time and budgetary constraints have prevented most of the districts contracting with WEA from offering the full course to their paraprofessionals.

MAJOR PROGRAM FEATURES

The SEE program was based on a similar communications skills program developed by Performance Learning Systems (PLS), and WEA worked with PLS to tailor the program to strengthen the basic communications skills of paraprofessionals. Since 1991, WEA has selected teams (usually a teacher and a paraprofessional) to become SEE trainers. The whole program includes five ten-hour modules: Skills for Understanding, Skills for Overcoming Resistance, Skills for Problem-Solving, Non-Verbal Communication and Humor, and POWER Judgment Win-Win Resolutions.

Schools and school districts contract with WEA to offer the program, which uses a training team from the local area. WEA officials and trainers report that districts often are unable to offer the complete program because of time and budgetary constraints; consequently, the program is typically modified by the training team to fit the site's needs. Paraprofessionals can receive college credit from Seattle Pacific University, or clock-hour credit through WEA. (Participants receive one college credit or ten clock hours per each ten-hour module.)

Trainers often present SEE as a three-hour workshop or as a ten-hour program, with lessons drawn from all five modules. The training focuses on practical or "survival skills." For example, in the segment on nonverbal communication, trainers help participants understand that students need to hear consistent messages. Paraprofessionals and other support staff appreciate SEE because classified employees do not have the benefit of the training that the teachers receive.

WEA encourages districts to invite teachers to participate in the SEE program along with their paraprofessionals; however, few districts have done so. Still, some teachers were simultaneously involved in a similar training course called Project Teach, and the training teams were able to bring the two groups together so that they can serve as resources when they return to their districts.

Funding

Schools or school districts typically offer the program to paraprofessionals and other support staff free of charge because most paraprofessionals cannot afford to pay for such training. Districts often use grants or money from special paraprofessional training funds authorized by the state legislature.

EVIDENCE OF SUCCESS

WEA staff estimate that between 300 and 400 paraprofessionals have completed some variation of the SEE training, although data on the number who have received college or clock hour credit are not available. A formal evaluation of the program is not planned, but WEA and Performance Learning Systems regularly review the on-site surveys completed by participants to see whether changes are needed. Trainers note that they always receive very positive feedback, although participants say they still need more training. The segments appreciated most by participants are those focusing on role playing and working in real situations.

Parent Involvement Workers
Wichita Public Schools
Wichita, Kansas

Paraprofessionals Helping Parents

- Title I paraprofessional parent involvement workers manage school-based resource centers
- Parent involvement workers link home and school efforts to boost academic success
- Site-specific planning, budgeting, and professional development keep PIW's work focused on school mission

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OVERVIEW

Ted Green, who has a steady job in a factory but no high school diploma, was often frustrated when he tried to help his son, Elijah, with his homework. Noticing Elijah's struggles in school, his teacher asked Alice Henry, the parent involvement worker (PIW), if she could help. Stopping by the Greens' apartment one evening, Alice invited Ted to a homework help workshop at the parent resource center, where he met other parents with the same problem. Together, they learned not only how to support their children's academic efforts, but also how to use a few simple questions to extend the children's learning while enhancing their own understanding of math concepts. From her conversations with Ted during his activities at the center, Alice discovered that both Ted and Elijah needed dental and medical services; in addition, worried about Elijah's latchkey status, Ted wanted to find affordable afterschool childcare. Alice used her networks to find help for the Greens, and now Ted counts her as a family friend.

Twenty-four of Wichita's elementary schools and an early childhood education center employ paraprofessionals as parent involvement workers, who operate parent resource centers and reach out to draw parents into partnership with teachers. Based on what parents and teachers need, PIWs develop programs to provide coordinated, informed support for students' studies. Parenting classes, family nights, and workshops help build a tight link between school and home. A centrally located, districtwide parent resource center is open to all parents.

DISTRICT CONTEXT

Located in south central Kansas, the Wichita Public School system is the largest in the state, with more than 47,000 students. The district has 68 elementary schools, 16 middle schools, and 13 high schools. Fifteen elementary magnet schools are organized around a variety of special themes including: a "traditional" program that emphasizes reading, composition, grammar, handwriting, spelling, mathematics, and social studies; the performing arts; the environment; "open" education; and health and wellness.

Nearly 22 percent of Wichita's students are African American; 10 percent are Hispanic; 5 percent are Asian; and 2 percent are American Indian. In 1994-95, 48 percent of students received free or reduced-price lunches.

MAJOR PROGRAM FEATURES

Coordination between Home and School

PIWs serve as a vital link between teachers and parents. When teachers conclude that students need more parent help with their studies, they ask PIWs to help. Teachers use PIWs as a resource for classroom activities. PIWs communicate with teachers and parents through notes, meetings before and after school, telephone calls, and home visits.

Teachers appreciate the contribution PIWs make to the schools' mission. Knowledgeable about the curriculum, PIWs meet weekly with teachers at each grade level to discuss lesson plans and student progress. Teachers and PIWs also publish a parent newsletter that not only summarizes and explains the content covered in classes, but also discusses issues affecting the school district, such as the school budget, magnet schools, and learning opportunities for parents and students. Although they are not paid for the extra time, PIWs often serve on school committees and attend staff meetings.

PIWs invite parents to the resource centers for workshops that focus on how to coach their children in various subjects, including math, reading, and spelling. More than 3,000 different activities at the parent resource centers cover all skill areas in grades K-5. PIWs work with classroom teachers to coordinate center activities with classroom instruction. For example, when math classes introduce the concept of multiplication, parents may make multiplication flash cards and learn how to use them in games so that children can master facts and applications. A math specialist teaches families to

use math manipulatives in the "Treasure Your Trash" program. Parents learn to use items such as egg cartons, string, and bottle caps for counting. When teachers identify students who are not reading at grade level, PIWs show parents how to construct game boards laminated on folders, learning slides, and bound composition books to encourage creative writing at home. Parents work with several color and number recognition activities, cutting out letters and numbers that they can take home.

The district operates a take-home computer program for Title I parents. PIWs recommend families for this program, and train parents on basic computer skills and computer activities they can do with their children. Parents take the computers home for six weeks.

Parenting Classes

Parenting classes are a regular feature of resource center programs. Parents learn new ways to interact with their children and to promote their academic success.

Counselors conduct the "Love and Logic" workshops in separate groups for teachers and parents. This program emphasizes letting children not only make responsible decisions but also learn from their mistakes. Teachers and parents both take this workshop to ensure consistency between the classroom and home.

"Effective Black Parenting" concentrates on how corporal punishment compares to the brutality of slavery. Presented with alternatives to corporal punishment, African-American parents learn that children often react differently to various forms of discipline. Conducted in Spanish, the "Los Niños workshop has some of the same cultural implications. Although some worry that such approaches nurture racial separatism, PIWs have found that they promote family pride, and all parents are welcome at every workshop. More than 100 parents have completed these programs over the last three years; for many it was their first experience of involvement in school activities.

Family Nights

Several times each year, PIWs work with school staff to plan family nights during which parents, teachers, and students come to the schools. These events usually have a specific theme, such as math, uses of computers, or health issues. On hand to answer questions, teachers and community leaders lead activities for parents and children.

Contacting Parents

PIWs telephone parents and make home visits to encourage them to participate in school activities. Documenting each contact, PIWs track parental participation in a family roster. Their goal is for all parents to participate in at least one activity each year. PIWs often visit families who either have a historically low participation rate or are experiencing problems. During home visits, PIWs are always accompanied by a teacher, social worker, counselor, or a school principal. Informing parents of the school programs, they explain that parental participation makes a difference to children's education, and they assure parents that the school will provide transportation and childcare for school events. Offering support and encouragement, PIWs always begin home visits on a positive note; they bring parents something helpful such as flash cards. Recently, PIWs at some schools visited all the homes of parents who had not attended parent-teacher conferences. At another school, the principal and a PIW visited every family in the school over a nine-week period. PIWs are not required to make home visits; it is just something that they do to ensure that every family is involved.

By providing specific roles for parents and encouraging teachers to view parents as partners, PIWs strive to make parents feel welcome at the school. PIWs operate a "Helping Hands Day," where parents volunteer at the school weekly, performing clerical duties for teachers. This program brings parents into the school; teaches them new skills, such as operating a copying machine or using a computer; and helps nurture social relationships between PIWs and parents. Although the PIW contacts parents to participate in this program after teacher referral, some parents are contacted on an *ad hoc* basis. Parents eagerly participate in the program, allowing teachers more time for instruction and making parents feel part of the school system.

PIWs use incentives to encourage parents to attend school activities. The district developed the Very Involved Parent (VIP) program, in which parents receive points for each event they attend. At the end of the year these points are redeemed for gifts, groceries, meals, books, and other items donated by local merchants. PIWs obtain donations from local businesses to use as incentives for parents at school events. PIWs assist in scheduling parent-teacher conferences in the evenings or at other convenient times for parents. For students living outside the surrounding neighborhood, schools hold conferences at churches and community centers near the parents' homes. PIWs attend these conferences, giving parents learning materials to help their children.

PIWs often refer parents to area service agencies for food, clothing, or health care. Parents often develop close relationships with the PIWs, informing them of their problems. PIWs also connect parents with GED classes, adult literacy programs, and other adult tutoring programs.

Parent Advisory Council

At each school, PIWs serve on parent advisory councils that deal with Title I issues. This year the schools developed "Parents Active in Title I," a pilot program that creates a compact between parents and school administrators. Parent "contracts" delineate what parents need to do to support instructional strategies. For example, PIWs give short-term assignments to parents to carry out with their children, such as learning 50 sight words, reading for 20 minutes, or moving bedtime up to 8 p.m. for all first and second graders. The district hopes to expand and implement this program fully, in conjunction with new Title I legislation that promotes parent participation in school decisionmaking.

Bilingual Component

Two schools with large limited- or non-English speaking populations employ bilingual PIWs to assist students and families. In many instances, parents at these schools are not literate in any language. Bilingual PIWs translate teachers' classroom notes and the school newsletter for parents, and they serve as translators in parent-teacher conferences. They work with parents in resource centers, make home visits, and conduct weekly classes for parents who wish to learn English. The district also employs two bilingual translators who work in schools for special events or purposes, as requested. Bilingual PIWs have increased non-English speaking parent involvement fourfold.

SUPPORT FOR IMPLEMENTATION

School Plans

Every spring, schools develop a plan to meet the needs of the parents at their site through the use of a "Home-School Partnership Planner." Viewing parents as both teachers and learners, schools organize events that foster communication between parents and teachers and get parents involved in parent-teacher organizations. The school and the PIWs conduct needs assessments by interviewing parents and conducting surveys. Although the district has provided the staff for the parent resource center, next year, under new site-based management guidelines, schools that do not have Title I schoolwide projects will have the option to discontinue the parent

resource centers. However, school administrators are confident that they will continue to support PIWs in the future. Through site-based management, schools can take ownership of the parent resource centers and meet the specific needs of their students.

Funding

Included every year with the schools' Title I budgets is a parent involvement budget, which funds PIWs, parent resource centers, and other expenses associated with parental involvement. Title I schoolwide projects set aside money in their budget for parent involvement.

Professional Development

PIWs receive training and guidance at the districtwide main parent resource center. Every month PIWs receive three to six hours of professional development. Attending workshops along with teachers and other paraprofessionals, PIWs learn about child development and new instructional strategies. Recent training workshops have focused not only on curriculum areas such as math manipulatives, language development, spelling strategies, mathematics, but also on areas such as leadership development, dealing with difficult people, running parent-teacher conferences, and using TQM. PIWs request or pursue their own professional development as well. For example, a PIW who needed computer training had her supervisor arrange training for her. PIWs also submit a formal evaluation of the schools' program each year to the district's parent resource director.

Evaluation

PIWs are evaluated periodically at the district level on their ability to design and implement the programs, participation in professional development, and demonstrated level of commitment. The district requires that all classified employees be evaluated on leadership, initiative, and appearance. Meeting with PIWs regularly, the director of the district parent resource center observes them when necessary and helps them set goals for each year. PIWs work full-time and earn $9 to $12 an hour, plus medical benefits. They belong to a local union for classified employees.

EVIDENCE OF SUCCESS

Schools credit the work of PIWs for increasing parental participation in Title I programs, in which some parents participate daily. One Title I school boasts 95 percent parent participation in at least one school activity each year, and 100 percent parent attendance at parent-teacher conferences. Title I parents now aspire to leadership positions in parent-teacher organizations.

Site-Based Management
Wyoming Public Schools
Wyoming, Michigan

Everyone Has Their Say

- Paraprofessionals boost school effectiveness in serving bilingual, Title I, and special education students
- Shared training enables all school staff to contribute to "Total Quality Education"

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OVERVIEW

Before he became a member of the site-based decisionmaking council at his school, Leonard often felt alienated from the rest of the faculty. Now that he has received in-depth training on how to be a part of the decisionmaking team, Leonard thinks his job is more fulfilling and knows that the skills he is learning help him to be a more effective Title I paraprofessional. Last year he used the stipend he received for working on the council to pay for a course on learning styles at the local community college.

The Wyoming public schools adopted both districtwide and individual school site-based decisionmaking (SBDM) in 1987 to promote collegial relations between staff members. Not only does each school have a SBDM council, but each school is governed by shared decisionmaking. The district ensured that paraprofessionals and other support staff were included in the SBDM from the beginning, and currently several support personnel (including a paraprofessional) have assumed leadership roles in the SBDM committees.

After being beset by strikes and unproductive labor relations, the district began considering SBDM in 1984. According to the assistant superintendent, school officials investigated school-based decisionmaking as a restructuring possibility and saw it as a "very productive model." Although the district first applied SBDM to labor issues, such as teacher contracts and support staff contracts, district officials quickly recognized the value of the approach and applied it to all functions, including decisions about instruction, budget, and personnel.

DISTRICT CONTEXT

Just outside of Grand Rapids, this suburban district serves 6,000 students in eight elementary schools, two middle schools, and three high schools, and it serves about 1,500 adult education students at its community education center. Wyoming's population has changed dramatically in the past few years because many Korean, Vietnamese, and Hispanic families moved to the suburb. District officials note that as recently as three years ago, minority students represented 5 percent of the city's students; today, 14 percent of the schools' students are African American, Asian, or Hispanic. Almost 25 percent of the district's students receive free or reduced-price lunches; however, the city's demographic influx had a disproportionate impact on one elementary school, with the percentage of students receiving subsidized lunches increasing from 22 percent to 72 percent in one year. The district employs 400 teachers and 66 paraprofessionals. Almost half of the latter are employed in special education, and most others work in bilingual education, Title I, and other programs for at-risk students.

MAJOR PROGRAM FEATURES

District Management

A Professional Council, made up of a teacher representative, a support staff representative, the district's two assistant superintendents, and the superintendent, now oversees the district's personnel management. The council meets monthly to review procedures and make budget decisions for the district's 13 schools and the community education center.

Rose Pratt, a paraprofessional at the district's community center, has been the support personnel representative since the council was first established. "At first," she said, "my peers told me it would be a waste of time, that the council wouldn't really care about my views and concerns." However, both she and the other members ensured the council sought input from everyone.

School Governance

Each school is governed by a School Improvement Committee, consisting of four teachers, one support person, a representative from the community, and the administrator of the school. District officials are quick to point out that everyone's vote is equal on these committees so that a paraprofessional's vote counts as much as the principal's. In addition, other committees or teams develop as needed by each site, such as a student-oriented team or a business partnership team.

Devoting time to serve on committees is a concern because paraprofessionals and other support staff are paid an hourly wage, not a salary, and participating in SBDM takes up personal time. Partially as a result of this concern, the district developed a stipend for all staff (except administrators) who participate on the teams; this has averaged about $200 a year.

Training

As part of the district's commitment to SBDM and overall policy, all district staff receive ongoing training that ensures that staff have a voice in determining their instruction. For example, to help district staff respond to the demographic changes, all employees now receive training on sustaining and valuing cultural diversity. Along with regular training for employees, the district offers staff involved in SBDM issue-specific training so that School Improvement Committee members can make informed decisions. Some examples of the training that these committees receive include:

- Orientation sessions for new committee members so that they can learn the overall operations of the school and some basic management concepts
- Seminars or presentations on the policy and regulation changes resulting from the reauthorization of the federal Title I program
- Workshops on Total Quality Leadership, which applies principles similar to Total Quality Management (the district has sent several teams to these sessions)

Committee members share the knowledge they gain in these training sessions with their colleagues.

EVIDENCE OF SUCCESS

Although the district has not conducted evaluations of its site-based decisionmaking, the general morale has improved greatly, according to administrators and support staff. Before site-based management, there was a perceived rift between teachers and paraprofessionals, and the two groups did not even interact in the staff lounge. That tension has subsided, and at Wyoming schools "we have very few bosses around here anymore: now we have teamworkers."

Indirect measures of the district's success include publications citing Wyoming as a model and a videotape on shared decisionmaking using Wyoming as a case study.

Career Development Program
Albuquerque School District
Albuquerque, New Mexico

A University-District-Association Partnership

- Financial and social support strengthen career ladder
- Innovative funding promotes interagency collaboration
- Classroom experience is linked to certification

OVERVIEW

Elena is a full-time college student for the first time in her life at the age of 32. After working as an educational assistant in a public elementary school for seven years, she received a scholarship that allows her to take a leave of absence from work and study full-time. Before the semester started, Elena was concerned about finding her way around campus, keeping up with her courses, and helping her husband and two children cope with the demands resulting from her becoming a full-time student. Attending a support group has helped her adjust because the group provides a place where she can ask questions and share feelings about her experiences. After the semester is over, Elena, who has applied for and was awarded a federal grant, will resume her studies full-time next semester and finish her bachelor's degree in special education within a year.

The Career Development Program targets educational assistants in the Albuquerque Public Schools (APS), providing them with one-semester scholarships at the University of New Mexico (UNM). The program is a collaborative effort by APS, UNM, and the Albuquerque Educational Assistants Association (AEAA), an AFT affiliate. The program provides scholarship recipients with leave time from their jobs, financial assistance to compensate them for both lost income and the costs of tuition and books, and a support group to help them make the transition to their new experiences as full-time students.

PROGRAM CONTEXT

The Career Development Program awards scholarships to five educational assistants every semester. There are about 97,000 students and 11,000 school staff members in the public schools in

Albuquerque. APS has about 1,600 educational assistants, including 1,400 who work full-time. Educational assistants in APS are funded through the following programs: Title I, Title VII, Special Education, and Indian education.

MAJOR PROGRAM FEATURES

Program Development

In January 1990, representatives from APS and UNM discussed the need to provide support for educational assistants with limited resources who were interested in earning a bachelor's degree in education. Although previously many educational assistants had taken courses at the vocational-technical college in Albuquerque and participated in training offered by AEAA, few could afford to take education courses at UNM and work toward their teaching certificate.

A planning group, consisting of individuals from both APS and UNM, discussed how to provide support to educational assistants and how to meet the needs of mid-career professionals who want to earn their teaching certificates to teach at the elementary level. The group, led by Dr. Keith Auger of UNM, developed an exchange of services financial model (discussed below) to support a scholarship/degree program for educational assistants and an intern/licensure program for mid-career professionals with bachelor's degrees outside of education.

Targeted Participants

To be accepted into the scholarship/degree program, candidates must have worked as educational assistants at an Albuquerque public school for at least three years. In addition, program staff look for educational assistants with some college credits who have earned contact hours by taking courses offered by AEAA and the school district. Applicants must submit a resume, a set of recommendations, including one from their principal or another person who has supervised their work, and a completed UNM application form.

Once they are selected, scholarship recipients enroll in one of four departments: elementary, secondary, bilingual, or special education. Thus far, all scholarship recipients have been women, their ages ranging from their mid-30s to their 50s. Recipients are 54 percent minority (52 percent Hispanic and 2 percent Asian).

Program staff publicize the program by advertising in newsletters and career opportunities brochures sent to APS teachers, sending a mailing to members of AEAA, and mailing a flier to each school.

Financial Assistance and Leave Time

Each educational assistant selected to participate in the program receives a one-semester scholarship of $5,000. Some of the scholarship pays for full-time tuition and expenses, and the remainder offsets the loss of income from not working. Because APS gives them leave time, educational assistants can return to their jobs once they complete the program.

Support Group

Scholarship recipients, many of whom are the first in their families to go to college, have many concerns and fears once they begin the program. To learn how to negotiate the university system, and to share their experiences with each other, they meet on a bi-weekly basis. Their meetings are facilitated by a professor from the Department of Family Studies and Counseling at UNM. At the meetings, they learn about different resources at UNM. For example, the new scholarship recipients tour the Center for Academic Performance, a tutoring program at the University, and they meet the center's director. Many of them work with tutors at the center.

Curriculum Content

Once scholarship recipients satisfy UNM's core course requirements and are ready to begin their professional coursework, they may choose between a traditional track and a blocked track. In the traditional track, students complete their courses and then they do their student teaching. In the blocked track, students take integrated courses while they do their fieldwork.

Funding

The Career Development Program awards scholarships to ten educational assistants each year, at a total cost of $50,000. The program also makes $10,000 available for recipients electing to continue their studies for an additional semester. The scholarships are funded through an exchange-of-services financial model: through a contractual agreement with APS, UNM supplies the district with elementary teacher interns who cover an average of 15 classrooms every year.

Scholarships are funded through an internship licensure program. The interns are mid-career professionals enrolled in a 17-month, 39-semester-hour program at UNM to earn elementary teaching licenses. They begin the program in January, taking courses and working full-time in an elementary classroom under the supervision of a mentor teacher. After taking courses during the summer, the interns receive temporary teaching licenses.

In the fall, the interns co-teach in pairs. During spring semester, one intern from each pair becomes the head teacher in the same classroom while the other becomes the head teacher in a different classroom (and often in a different school). Throughout the program, the interns meet weekly in methods seminars and receive weekly in-classroom support from supervisors.

Interns pay tuition only for the first spring semester. Once they co-teach in the fall and teach on their own during the second spring semester, they earn about one-third of a beginning teacher's salary, paid by the program. With the money it saves, UNM can pay the scholarships for the educational assistants, the program director's salary, and stipends for supervisors, mentors, and interns.

Other Opportunities

The Technical Vocational Institute in Albuquerque offers an associate's degree program in child development for educational assistants. Educational assistants take courses at a cost of $23 per credit hour. Eighty-five credit hours are transferable to UNM.

The Albuquerque Teachers Federation offers educational assistants 16 training courses. One of these courses, Educational Research and Dissemination, is a 16-hour course, but the rest are all two-hour courses. Educational assistants can earn career ladder credit for taking college courses or courses provided by the teachers' union.

EVIDENCE OF SUCCESS

The program was started in January 1991. As of May 1995, there were 48 scholarship recipients. Twenty-two have earned degrees in education along with their teaching licenses. Twenty of these 22 are now working as regular classroom teachers, bilingual teachers, and special education teachers in elementary and secondary classrooms. Only one scholarship recipient chose not to finish her degree; the rest are continuing to take courses.

Through the program 36 of the 48 recipients have received additional support ranging from $1,000 to $5,000, to continue their studies. In addition, through the support group, many of them have applied for and received grants, loans, and other scholarships. Through creative schedules some scholarship recipients work as educational assistants while they continue taking courses full-time.

In 1995, the Career Development Program won an Association of Teacher Educators' Distinguished Teacher Education Program Award.

Career Ladder Program
Cleveland City School District
Cleveland, Ohio

Training and Career Development Opportunities for Paraprofessionals

- Career ladder promotes development for all paraprofessionals and certification for some
- Professional development projects tailored to individual assignments
- Financial support strengthens career ladder

OVERVIEW

Vicki works as a paraprofessional in a fifth-grade classroom in a Cleveland public elementary school. Vicki has a goal, called a job target, which is to help ten students improve their reading skills, as measured by standardized tests, by the end of the school year. Because she is a participant in the Cleveland Professional Career Ladder program, Vicki will receive a bonus for her work if her students achieve the reading goal that she set for them. During the past two years, she has taken courses at the district's Paraprofessional Development Institute and at a nearby four-year college. To become a regular classroom teacher, Vicki plans to earn her bachelor's degree and teaching certificate.

The Cleveland Career Ladder program is a five-year-old program that provides paraprofessionals with several options for professional growth and career development. A collaborative effort between the Cleveland Board of Education and the Cleveland Teachers' Union, the program is open to paraprofessionals who work in elementary and secondary classrooms. In addition to taking certain courses offered by the district's Paraprofessional Development Institute, program participants develop and work toward job targets. They may also apply for a leave of absence to take college courses and work toward their degrees and teaching certificates.

PROGRAM CONTEXT

The Career Ladder program is currently serving 31 paraprofessionals. Forty-eight percent of them are African American, 32 percent are Asian American, 13 percent are Hispanic, and 7 percent are white. Seventy-four paraprofessionals have participated in the program since it was started in 1990.

The Cleveland City School District (CCSD) enrolls 77,007 students, 70 percent of whom are African American. Seventy-six percent of the students receive free or reduced-price lunches. Four percent of the students have limited English proficiency. There are 4,300 certified teachers and 500 paraprofessionals in the CCSD.

MAJOR PROGRAM FEATURES

Program Development

In March 1988, the Board of Education of the CCSD and the Cleveland Teachers Union agreed to establish a joint committee to develop a career ladder program for full-time paraprofessionals. The committee, which consisted of teachers, paraprofessionals, and administrators, met regularly for two years to develop the program's goals: to attract and retain the best qualified and most capable paraprofessionals, to provide them with career options, and to encourage them to participate in professional development.

Program Design

The Career Ladder program offers three separate tracks for full-time paraprofessionals. The teacher track is for paraprofessionals who want to become certified teachers; the combination track is for those who want to earn some college credits but not a degree; and the enrichment track is for those seeking to improve their teaching without taking any college courses. The teacher track has five separate levels, and the others have four levels each.

Paraprofessionals who apply to participate in the teacher track qualify for different levels based on their years of paraprofessional experience in CCSD and the number of quarter or semester hours of credit they have completed at an accredited college or university. Paraprofessionals with at least one year of work experience and 48 quarter hours or 32 semester hours of college study qualify for Level I; those at Level V have at least four years of experience and 162 quarter or 104 semester hours.

Paraprofessionals who apply to participate in the combination track qualify for different levels based on how many years they have worked as a paraprofessional in CCSD and how many combination hours they have completed. (Each semester hour equals five combination hours, each quarter hour equals 3.3 combination hours, and each hour of inservice training equals one combination hour.) Those who apply to participate in the enrichment track qualify for different levels based on how many years they have worked as a paraprofessional in CCSD and how many inservice training hours they have completed in the previous five years.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Targeted Participants

Paraprofessionals who apply are selected to participate in the program based on an interview, a writing exercise, and the track and level requirements they must meet. To be selected, they must also possess a high school diploma or GED and a valid Ohio Educational Aide Permit enabling them to work in a public school as an educational aide or instructional assistant.

Paid Professional Leave

To earn their bachelor's degree and teacher certification, paraprofessionals on Level V of the teacher track can apply for a paid leave of absence to take college courses. Three types of paid leave are available: student teaching leave, semester leave, and school year leave. Paraprofessionals work toward degrees in elementary education, secondary education, and special education, receiving up to $1,000 per year to take courses at any college or university.

The school district has made a commitment to hire paraprofessionals who earn their teaching certificates to serve as regular classroom teachers. Paraprofessionals who become certified teachers are credited with a half-year's experience for every year that they worked as a paraprofessional. For example, someone who worked for six years as a paraprofessional would receive the same salary as someone with three years of teaching experience.

All paraprofessionals who accept professional study leave must commit to teaching in CCSD for at least two years.

Job Targets

Paraprofessionals in the program are required to develop job targets, or performance objectives, with their principal. Written in measurable terms, each job target must improve the learning process for students and support the district's goals and objectives. Paraprofessionals in the program choose many types of job targets, including helping students improve their reading skills, organizing playground activities, and conducting workshops for parents. At the end of the year, paraprofessionals determine the success ratio for each of their job targets. For example, if a paraprofessional's job target was to help ten students improve their reading skills, and only seven improved as measured by their standardized tests, then the paraprofessional's success ratio would be 70 percent.

For their work with job targets, paraprofessionals may earn bonuses worth up to 25 days of pay. They are compensated based on the number of days they worked multiplied by their total success ratio.

In 1994-95, they received up to 12 days of pay because job targets were performed only during the spring semester.

Staff Development

The school district offers staff development through the Paraprofessional Development Institute. Program participants are required to take seven four-hour core curriculum courses offered by the Institute. They must take Career Ladder Orientation, Job Targets, Remedial Order, and Child Management/Instruction during Year I; and Human Relations, Technological Tools, and Human Growth and Development during Year II.

Other courses are available on an as-needed basis. These include Paraprofessional Self-Improvement, Health and Safety, Stress Management, and Community Involvement.

Funding

The school district spends about $100,000 a year in general funds to finance the program. It costs roughly $2,000 for each participant.

Other Opportunities

Tomorrow's New Teachers (TNT), a program funded by the DeWitt Wallace-Reader's Digest Fund, provides financial assistance to paraprofessionals from the CCSD taking courses at Cleveland State University. The four-year program is expected to provide financial assistance to about 27 paraprofessionals. The district has made a commitment to hire each program participant earning a bachelor's degree and teaching certificate.

Barriers to Implementation

Because the district has a debt of more than $100 million, several teaching positions were eliminated last fall. In addition, more than 300 paraprofessionals were laid off, including some participating in the Career Ladder program. The total number of paraprofessionals working in the school district has decreased from more than 800 to 500.

EVIDENCE OF SUCCESS

Eleven program participants have become regular classroom teachers since the program began in 1990.

Teaching Opportunities for Paraprofessionals
State Department of Education
Connecticut

Minority Teacher Recruitment

- Financial, social, and academic support strengthen career ladder
- Classroom experience is linked to certification

OVERVIEW

Tanesha remembers when Ms. Washington used to be a teacher's helper in her third-grade Title I reading class. Now Ms. Washington is her seventh-grade Language Arts teacher. Through TOP, a state-funded paraprofessional-to-teacher program, Ms. Washington attended Central Connecticut State University to complete her degree and earn her teaching certification. To win the program slot, Ms. Washington first earned two years of college credits. After finishing her degree as a TOP participant, Ms. Washington was hired as a regular classroom teacher by the district in which she had worked as a paraprofessional.

Connecticut's TOP program aims to increase the number of certified minority teachers serving students in the state's urban school districts. Although only 26 percent of students statewide were minorities in 1992-93, the percentage was far higher in urban districts. For example, 93 percent of students in Hartford that year were members of minority groups. To help provide role models and make the teaching force more reflective of the student population, the state created Teaching Opportunities for Paraprofessionals (TOP), a paraprofessional-to-teacher program that pays paraprofessionals' college tuition and funds their classroom replacements at the district.

PROGRAM CONTEXT

Sixty-four paraprofessionals have participated in TOP since 1989. Of those participants, 48 percent are African American, 31 percent are Hispanic and bilingual in Spanish, 2 percent are Asian American, and 19 percent are white, with some bilingual in Portuguese. Eight TOP participants are male and 56 are female.

MAJOR PROGRAM FEATURES

History

In 1989, the Connecticut state legislature established a pilot program to assist minority paraprofessionals working in the state's five largest urban school districts to become certified teachers. Initially, this group included the Hartford, New Haven, Bridgeport, New Britain, and Stamford school districts. The legislature also called for the state to solicit matching funds from corporations. In 1991, TOP program administrators asked for continued funding from the state board of education, and TOP became a regular state department of education program. Concurrently, at the request of TOP directors, the state legislature amended the law and increased to ten the number of eligible participating districts so that the program could serve all areas of the state, including Danbury, New London, Waterbury, Windham, and Meriden.

Participating District Selection

Districts were chosen to participate if they had large minority student populations (at least 30 percent), low numbers of minority teachers, low student SES (below the 26th percentile on average), and low test scores. Districts also needed to employ a substantial pool of paraprofessionals from which to draw applicants for TOP. Although the available supply of paraprofessionals was not an issue in the big cities, it proved to be the case in smaller cities such as Waterbury.

Participant Selection

Districts select their participants from among the instructional paraprofessionals they employ. To qualify for the program, paraprofessionals must pass tests in writing, mathematics, and reading, earning scores that meet a state-set standard, and they must have some college credits. Given TOP's goal, recruiting targets minorities, but nonminority paraprofessionals are also admitted. To maintain high professional standards while broadening eligibility for the program, some districts provide tutoring to help candidates pass the tests required for admission to TOP. Once in the program, paraprofessionals must maintain at least a 2.5 GPA in their college courses to maintain eligibility.

Coordination with District and Higher Education Partners

In 1989, the TOP director and then-state education commissioner actively recruited college and university partners from participating districts to educate TOP paraprofessionals. Central Connecticut State University, Southern Connecticut State University, Sacred

Heart College, St. Joseph University, the University of Hartford, Western Connecticut State University, and Connecticut College currently enroll TOP students. Like other applicants, paraprofessionals must qualify for admission, although the universities may give them preference for admission based on their enrollment in the TOP program.

SUPPORT FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Salary and Benefits

Paraprofessionals usually attend college full-time one semester and work for the alternate semester until they are near graduation, when they often choose to become year-round students. Because TOP pays the salary and benefits of the participant's replacement at the district, and the district continues to pay the participant's salary and benefits, paraprofessionals have the financial means to attend college.

Support Services

TOP coordinates support services for participants to help them along the way; each college and district designates a TOP coordinator. At almost all colleges, faculty meet with participants every month or two to advise, solve problems, and provide necessary referrals to campus services. At all colleges, faculty meet with students individually to help plan their programs.

TOP contracts with the regional education service center, Area Cooperative Educational Services (ACES), to run a series of workshops on issues of concern to the paraprofessionals, including classroom management, curriculum content, student teaching, interview skills, and the transition from paraprofessional to teacher. ACES offers preparation for the state's Beginning Educator Support and Training (BEST) evaluation, an assessment of a teacher's first year in the classroom required for the state's second level of regular certification. The center also provides preparation for taking the standardized tests required to enter a teacher education program and the CONNTENT test of subject-area knowledge required for preliminary certification.

TOP publishes "TOPTALK," a newsletter that goes out to all participants and providers. The document, designed to promote group cohesion, describes the challenges experienced by TOP participants. The program also sponsors an annual gala honoring participants and the year's TOP graduates. The state commissioner of education speaks at the gala and the press covers the event.

Funding

TOP is funded by the state education department budget and by donations from private contributors. Although the state originally envisioned that half the program costs would be funded by private donors, this arrangement did not materialize; instead, the majority of funding has come from the state. In 1993-94, the state contributed $488,000 to the program, and private businesses gave $28,000. Funding has remained relatively stable over the life of the program. The cost per participant per semester has also remained fairly stable at about $12,000.

Currently, the state pays institutions $1,700 per student per semester; this amount covers the costs of attending a state institution but not those at a private college. However, TOP administrators point out that schools do not lose money on TOP paraprofessionals because they take the same classes, share the same advisors, and use the same campus facilities that mainstream students do; they do not offer any new or special classes or services specially for TOP students. The state also pays testing fees for exams required for state certification.

Bookkeeping and bookstore expenditures work differently at each college. TOP sponsors a yearly meeting for university TOP coordinators to share program and budget ideas. Tracking the flow of funding has been an issue at all levels. For example, some corporations wanting to support paraprofessionals in specific districts have asked for reports detailing how their donations had been spent. Accounting for funds within institutions and school districts has also been problematic, and some districts have put in place more efficient systems than others.

EVIDENCE OF SUCCESS

About 64 people have participated in TOP since 1989. So far, 19 students have graduated; of these, 12 are teaching in the Connecticut public school systems where they previously worked as paraprofessionals, and one is teaching in a Catholic school. Eleven paraprofessionals dropped out of the program after failing to meet academic standards, and two participants are working to raise their GPAs or pass the CONNTENT exam. Three withdrew for personal reasons. Thirty-three paraprofessionals are still completing their programs.

Many paraprofessionals are on the Dean's List, and one holds a perfect 4.0 grade-point average. A TOP graduate recently became the only minority male elementary school teacher in his district.

Bilingual Pupil Services Program
New York City Public Schools
New York, New York

Increasing the Pool of Bilingual Education Teachers

- Career ladder improves certified bilingual workforce
- Classroom experience is linked to certification program
- Federal and local funds support professional development

OVERVIEW

Maria, a bilingual teacher intern in a fourth-grade classroom at a public elementary school in Brooklyn, provides bilingual instruction in reading, writing, and math four days a week to a small group of Spanish-speaking students who have limited English proficiency (LEP). Although Maria's duties are similar to those of a paraprofessional, her paying internship is part of a program that leads to certification. On Fridays, Maria attends training sessions on such topics as lesson planning and classroom management, assertive discipline, and multicultural education; she also meets with other interns to exchange ideas and support. Taking courses at Brooklyn College, she is only a few credits away from earning her bachelor's degree in bilingual elementary education.

The Bilingual Pupil Services program is a 22-year-old Title I project operated by the New York City (NYC) Board of Education's Division of Bilingual Education. The main goals of the Bilingual Pupil Services program are to increase the supply of bilingual teachers through a paraprofessional-to-teacher training program and to provide the students with supportive bilingual instruction to aid their acquisition of English as a second language. The program uses Title I funds to allow bilingual teacher interns to take education courses at approved branches of the City University of New York (CUNY) and thus earn teaching licenses and baccalaureate degrees so that they can become regular classroom teachers. The program also promotes the academic and linguistic development of Title I-eligible Hispanic, Chinese, and Haitian students who have LEP.

PROGRAM CONTEXT

The Bilingual Pupil Services program served about 80 interns during the fall of 1994. In December 1994, the program added a bilingual special education component. Twenty bilingual special education interns and 30 new bilingual interns enrolled in February 1995, bringing the total number of interns in the program to about 130.

In the spring of 1995, bilingual interns and bilingual special education interns worked with more than 2,500 students in grades 1-6 in 38 schools throughout 18 community school districts.

MAJOR PROGRAM FEATURES

Program Development

In the early 1970s, Board of Education staff met with principals and community school district administrators to review data about curriculum designs, the nature of instruction, student test scores, schools' organizational patterns, schools' needs, and the availability of support services. They found many LEP students who spoke Spanish, Chinese, or Haitian Creole were failing either to perform at grade level or to achieve competence in basic or more advanced skills. Consequently, the Board of Education decided to provide bilingual teacher interns with training and career development opportunities to improve their ability to meet the academic needs of these students. The Board continues to meet periodically to review program progress.

Targeted Participants

To be chosen for the program, interns must be fluent in Spanish, Chinese, or Haitian Creole as well as English, and possess a minimum of 60 college credits. Most interns learn about the program through word of mouth in the schools, often from other interns. The program is advertised by colleges and community-based organizations in New York City, and interns are referred to the program by other offices and divisions in the Board of Education, including the Division of Personnel. Interns selected for the program make a commitment to participate for at least two years and to work as public school teachers upon graduation from the program.

Educational associates and educational assistants can be selected to participate in the program. Although both work five and one-half hours per day, five days a week, the higher-ranking associates earn a higher salary.

Interns work with a particular segment of the school population: students of Hispanic, Chinese, or Haitian descent who have LEP and who are eligible for Title I services. Indicators of eligibility are (1) a score below the 40th percentile on the Language Assessment Battery Survey, or above the 23rd NCE and below the 35th NCE on the test of English proficiency; and (2) evidence of below-grade-level proficiency as measured either by the citywide reading and mathematics tests or by informal diagnoses, records of academic performance, and observations by professional staff.

Inservice Training and College Courses

Each fall, the program adds about 30 new interns. Teaching four days a week, new interns attend weekly inservice training sessions and monthly workshops from October until April. Topics covered at these training sessions include reading, writing, math, science, teaching English as a Second Language, teaching native languages (Spanish, Chinese, and Haitian Creole), lesson planning and classroom management, assertive discipline, and multicultural education. The training sessions are provided by specialists, whose roles are discussed below; the monthly workshops are conducted by outside experts.

To continue in the Bilingual Pupil Services program, interns must take at least six college credits each semester. Many interns enroll in the CUNY system because the Board of Education will pay tuition for interns and other paraprofessionals to take up to six credits each semester at any branch of the university. Interns can take courses at City College, Hunter College, Brooklyn College, Queens College, Bernard Baruch College, Lehmann College, the College of Staten Island, and other four-year colleges that are part of the CUNY system.

Interns earn certificates of achievement after they participate in 15 inservice training sessions. Most remain in the program for two or three years while they work toward their teaching credentials, although a few leave the program after only one year. Veteran interns often help program staff conduct inservice training sessions.

Other Support

Each intern works one-on-one with a cooperating teacher. Cooperating teachers, many of whom are former interns, are bilingual and teach in self-contained classrooms with at least 22 LEP students. Interns and cooperating teachers hold weekly conferences to develop lesson plans, discuss students' needs, and reflect on their work.

Five field instructional specialists conduct the inservice training sessions and supervise the interns in classrooms. Serving as resources to the interns and providing them with ongoing support, they are all tenured New York City public school teachers who are bilingual and who have previous experience supervising teachers and developing curriculum.

Interns have to write pupil logs and lesson plans regularly. They are evaluated by their cooperating teachers and principals in December and May. Evaluations for interns are based on their ability to develop lesson plans and manage groups of students, and on the rapport they have developed with other teachers and students. Interns are also observed and evaluated by program staff.

The interns meet with one another during the monthly workshops to share materials and reflect on their teaching experiences.

Curriculum Content for Students

The Bilingual Pupil Services program provides participating Title I-eligible LEP students with in-class, small-group bilingual instruction in reading (including listening, speaking, and writing) and mathematics in both their native language and English.

The size of the instructional groups for reading and mathematics instruction is based on the age, needs, level, and abilities of learners involved. Reading groups for children who are slightly below grade level are usually no larger than eight students, and groups for children needing more intensive reading assistance are limited to four students.

Interns provide 15 to 20 instructional sessions in reading and math each week over 41 weeks (the entire school year). The instructional sessions last 30 to 45 minutes. Interns also plan daily activities with their cooperating teachers and assist them in supervising students.

Funding

One of the "Chancellor's Initiatives," the Bilingual Pupil Services program receives Title I funds through the Board of Education's Division of Funded Programs. Six years ago, the program served 140 interns, but it has been level-funded for the past six years. As a result, it has had slots for only 85 to 95 interns each year for the past few years.

In December 1994, however, the NYC public schools' chancellor allocated to the program some tax levy funds that are being used to increase the number of slots for interns and add a bilingual special

education (BSE) component to the program. As a result, the program added 30 new bilingual interns and 20 BSE interns in February 1995. For now, the new component serves only BSE interns who work in classes for Spanish-speaking LEP special education students mildly in need of services. Bilingual special education interns work in classrooms where the average class size is 12 students.

Administration

The program director supervises the overall program, serving as program liaison not only with appropriate state and city officials but also with the program evaluator. Supervising the various program components, the director is responsible for ensuring that the program operates efficiently.

EVIDENCE OF SUCCESS

More than 1,500 teachers have earned their teaching licenses through the program; many have remained in New York City and taken teaching positions within the public school system. A number of them have been hired to work as regular classroom teachers in their intern placement schools. Some have gone on to become assistant principals, bilingual coordinators, and principals. A few have even become community school district superintendents. Interns have served more than 50,000 LEP students.

The Bilingual Pupil Services program has received several awards, including a U.S. Department of Education Compensatory Education Award, a Secretary of Education Certificate of Excellence, a New York City Board of Education Certificate of Excellence, and a New York State Certificate of Merit for being a model compensatory education program.

Appendices

APPENDIX A

Paraprofessional Job Titles and Descriptions

APPENDIX B

Profile Sites and Contacts

APPENDIX C

Federal Student Aid Programs

APPENDIX A
PARAPROFESSIONAL JOB TITLES AND DESCRIPTIONS

NATIONAL CENTER FOR EDUCATION STATISTICS

Paraprofessional

Someone who works alongside and assists professional individuals, often in a role described below:

Assistant counselor

Assists students, parents, teachers, or other staff, under the supervision or direction of a counselor, by helping individuals make plans and decisions in relation to education, career, or personal development

Bilingual aide

Assists in the instruction of students using more than one language for teaching content

Bilingual special education aide

Assists in the instruction of students in a special education program using more than one language for teaching content

Career aide

Assists students in the process of choosing a profession or occupation

Child care giver

Assists in organizing and leading prekindergarten children in activities such as reading, drawing, and games

Computer aide

Assists and provides direction to computer users

Extracurricular activity aide

Supervises school-sponsored activities that are not related to curriculum (e.g., sports), including all direct and personal services that are planned for student enjoyment

Financial aid specialist

Interviews students applying for financial aid, including loans, grants-in-aid, or scholarships, to determine eligibility for assistance

Monitor/prefect

Monitors the conduct of students in classrooms, detention halls, lunch rooms, playground, hallways, and places where alternatives to classroom instruction are provided (e.g., test sites)

Library aide

Assists in the maintenance and operation of a library by aiding in the selection, ordering, cataloging, processing, and circulation of all media

Media center aid

Assists in the maintenance and operation of a media center by serving as a specialist in the organization and use of all teaching and learning resources, including hardware, content material, and services

Psychologist assistant

Assists a psychologist with routine activities associated with providing psychological services

Teaching/classroom aide

Assists a teacher with routine activities associated with teaching (i.e., those activities requiring minor decisions regarding students, such as conducting rote exercises, operating equipment, and clerking)

Teaching assistant

Performs the day-to-day activities of teaching students while under the supervision of a teacher. The teaching assistant does not make diagnostic or long-range evaluative decisions regarding students. Teaching assistants include individuals who may or may not be certified but must have completed at least two years of formal education preparation for teaching or the equivalent in experience or training.

Tutor

Provides academic instruction (e.g., in English, mathematics, a foreign language) to students requiring additional assistance outside of the classroom

APPENDIX B
PROFILE SITES AND CONTACTS

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Paraprofessional Programs

Calcasieu (LA) Parish Early Childhood Education Programs

Candy Jones
Early Childhood Section Administrator
Bureau of Elementary Education
Louisiana Department of Education
P.O. Box 94064
Baton Rouge, LA 70804-9064
(504) 342-3358
FAX (504) 342-4474

Ina Dellahousseye
Supervisor of Instruction
Calcasieu Parish School District
600 South Shattuck
Lake Charles, LA 70601
(318) 491-1734
FAX (318) 491-1688

Denver (CO) Title I Instruction

Noble Jenkins
Supervisor of Instructional Assistants Program
900 Grant Street
Denver, CO 80203
(303) 764-3680
FAX (303) 764-3657

El Mirage (AZ) Migrant Head Start/Preschool Program

Betty Churchill
Dysart Migrant Head Start/Preschool Program
Dysart Unified School District #89
11405 North Dysart Road
El Mirage, AZ 85335
(602) 583-1910/876-7000

Frederick County (MD) Early Elementary Education Program

Sheri Ostrow Scher
Frederick County Public Schools
115 E. Church Street
Frederick, MD 21701
(301) 694-1347
FAX (301) 694-1800

Los Angeles County (CA) Developing a Partnership Program

Elsa Brizzi
Head Start/State Preschool Grantee
Los Angeles County Office of Education
17315 Studebaker Road
Cerritos, CA 90703
(310) 940-1770
FAX (310) 940-1740

Norfolk (VA) Parent Technicians Program

Margaret Taylor
Senior Coordinator, Special Projects
Norfolk Public Schools
Department of Special Projects
800 E. City Hall Avenue
Norfolk, VA 23510
(804) 441-2939
FAX (804) 441-1217

Spokane (WA) Title I Kindergarten Parent Involvement Program

Nell Hogue
Title I Coordinator
Bancroft School
1025 W. Spofford Avenue
Spokane, WA 99205
(509) 353-4409

Washington State School Employee Effectiveness Training

Bob Pickles
WEA Instruction/Human Relations
33434 Eighth Avenue South
Federal Way, WA 98003
(206) 941-6700
FAX (206) 946-4735

Wichita (KS) Title I Parent Involvement Workers Program

Jack Furan
Coordinator, Title I
Wichita Public Schools
The Education and Management Resource Center
201 North Water
Wichita, KS 67202-1292
(316) 833-4172
FAX (316) 833-4174

Jackie LuGrand
Supervisor, Parent Teacher Resources
412 S. Main Street
Wichita, KS 67202
(316) 833-5130
FAX (316) 833-5103

Wyoming (MI) Site-Based Management Program
Anita Rutlin
Wyoming Public Schools
3575 Gladiola Avenue, SW
Wyoming, MI 40509
(616) 530-7550
FAX (616) 530-7557

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Paraprofessional-to-Teacher Career Ladder Programs

Albuquerque (NM) Career Development Program
Sharon Olguin
CIMTE/Career Development Program
Mesa Vista Hall, Room 3047
University of New Mexico
Albuquerque, NM 87131-1241
(505) 277-6114
FAX (505) 277-2269

Cleveland (OH) Career Ladder Program
Alvin Evans and Marsha Logan
Room 511 - Classified Personnel Division
Cleveland Board of Education
1380 East Sixth Street
Cleveland, OH 44114
(216) 574-8275
FAX (216) 574-8258

Connecticut Department of Education: Teaching Opportunities for Paraprofessionals

Paul Briganti
TOP Program Manager
Connecticut State Department of Education
Box 2219, Room 363
Hartford, CT 06145
(203) 566-2098
FAX (203) 566-8929

New York City Bilingual Pupil Services Program

Celia M. Delgado
Director
Bilingual Pupil Services Program
New York City Board of Education
Division of Bilingual Education
131 Livingston Street, Room 512
Brooklyn, NY 11201
(718) 935-3913
FAX (718) 935-4215

APPENDIX C
FEDERAL STUDENT AID PROGRAMS

Federal financial aid can be an important resource for paraprofessionals seeking education degrees or teaching certificates. The following types of student assistance are available to full- and part-time students taking a course of study that leads to a degree or certificate and meets the U.S. Department of Education requirements for an eligible program. Additionally, certain types of federal student financial assistance are available for students enrolled at least half-time in a program to obtain a professional credential or certification required by a state for employment as an elementary or secondary school teacher (Federal Perkins Loans, FFEL Stafford Loans, and Direct Loans).

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Types of Assistance:

Pell Grants

Federal Pell grants provide financial assistance based on economic need to undergraduate students who have not earned a bachelor's or professional degree. Unlike loans, Pell Grants do not have to be repaid. The amount of the grant varies depending on student financial need, the yearly amount it costs to attend school, whether you are a full-time or part-time student, and whether you attend school for a full academic year or less. Pell Grants can be awarded to students enrolled on a less than half-time basis who meet the other eligibility criteria.

Direct Stafford Loans and Federal Family Education Stafford Loans

Students enrolled in an institution of higher education at least half-time to obtain a degree or certificate can apply for subsidized and unsubsidized loans through the Direct Stafford Loan program and the Federal Family Education Stafford Loan program. Subsidized loans are awarded on the basis of financial need. No interest is charged before repayment begins or for six months after the recipient graduates, leaves school, or enrollment status drops below half-time. Unsubsidized loans are not awarded on the basis of need, and interest is charged from the time the loan is granted until it is paid in full. The financial aid administrator of the school you wish to attend can help you determine how much money you can borrow.

Campus-Based Programs

Campus-based financial aid programs are federal student aid programs administered by the financial aid office of each participating school. Not all schools participate in all programs. The Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (FSEOG) is for undergraduate students with exceptional financial need and gives priority to students who receive Federal Pell Grants. An FSEOG does not have to be repaid. A Federal Perkins Loan is a low-interest loan for both undergraduate and graduate students with exceptional financial need. The school is the lender and the loan is made with federal government funds. The loan is repaid to the school.

General Eligibility Requirements

- With certain exceptions, an individual seeking federal student aid must be one of the following:

  — U.S. citizen;

  — U.S. national (includes natives of American Samoa or Swain's Inland); or

  — U.S. permanent resident with an Alien Registration Receipt Card.

- Students must be attending school at least half-time to be eligible to receive Direct or FFEL program loans. Half-time enrollment is not a requirement to receive aid from the Federal Pell Grant, Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (FSEOG), and the Federal Perkins Loan programs.

For Further Information

Free information on these programs, including application information, is available from the Federal Student Aid Information Center between 9 a.m. and 8 p.m. eastern time, Monday through Friday, at 1-800-433-3243, which is a toll-free number. Hearing impaired individuals may contact the Federal Student Aid Information Center by calling 1-800-730-8913, a toll-free TTD number.

Additionally, the U.S. Department of Education's World Wide Web site at http://www.ed.gov has a special section devoted to student aid. Another valuable source of free information is the U.S. Department of Education's Project EASI web site that offers students a "one-stop shopping" library of information on financial aid from government and private sources. The site is located at http://easi.ed.gov.

Information also is available from school financial aid administrators.

WORKS CONSULTED

Achiles, C., Nye, B., Bain, H., Zaharias, J., & Fulton, D. (1993, November 12). The teacher aide puzzle: Student achievement issues. An exploratory study. Paper presented at the Mid-South Educational Research Association, New Orleans, LA.

Bonstingl, J. (1992). Schools of quality: An introduction to total quality management in education. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy. (1986). A nation prepared: Teachers for the 21st century. Princeton, NJ: Author.

Chase, C., & Mueller, D. (1993). Teacher aides: What do they really do in instruction? ERS Spectrum: Journal of School Research and Information, 11(2), 16-20.

Fisher, C., Berliner, D., Filby, N., Marliave, R., Cahen, L., & Dishaw, M. (1980). Teaching behaviors, academic learning time, and student achievement: An overview. In C. Denham and A. Lierberman (Eds.), Time to learn: A review of the beginning teacher evaluation study. Washington, DC: Department of Health, Education, and Welfare.

Green, J., & Barnes, D. (1988). Do your "aides" aid instruction? A tool for assessing the use of paraprofessionals as instructional assistants. Teacher Educator, 24(3), 2-9.

Henke, R., Choy, S., Geis, S., & Broughman, S. (1996). Schools and staffing in the United States: A statistical profile, 1993-94. Washington, DC: U. S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics.

Jamgochian, R., Copeland, W., & Everhart, R. (1988). Reform, teacher improvement, and the use of paraprofessionals to alter traditional school structures and teacher roles. Teacher Education Quarterly, 15(4), 55-63.

Johnson, L. (1994). Setting standards. Washington, DC: American Federation of Teachers.

U S DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Los Angeles City and County School Employees Union, Local 99 SEIU. (1990, September). Teacher assistants: The history of a community exploited. Los Angeles, CA: Local 99.

Love, I., & Levine, D. (no date). Performance ratings of teacher aides with and without training and follow-up in extending reading instruction. Kansas City, MO. Unpublished manuscript.

Macias, R., & Lavadenz, M. (1995, March). Paraprofessionals, parateachers, paraeducators!!. Los Angeles: USC Latino Teacher Project. Unpublished draft of a research report.

Millsap, M., Moss, M., & Gamse, B. (1993). The Chapter 1 implementation study: Final report. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education.

Millsap, M., Turnbull, B., Moss, M., Brigham, N., Gamse, B., & Marks, E. (1992). The Chapter 1 implementation study: Interim report. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education.

National Center for Education Statistics. (1996). Digest of education statistics 1996. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education.

____. (1995). Schools and staffing survey, 1993-94. Unpublished data tabulations. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education

National Education Commission on Time and Learning. (1994). Prisoners of time. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory. (no date). Paraprofessional training manual. Portland, OR: Author.

Pfeiffer, J. (1989, July). The secret of life at the limits: Cogs become big wheels. Smithsonian, 20(4), 38-48.

Pickett, A., & the National Education Association. (1994). Paraprofessionals in the education workforce. Washington, DC: National Education Association.

Pickett, A., Vasa, S., & Steckelberg, A. (1993). Fastback 358: Using paraeducators effectively in the classroom. Bloomington, IN: Phi Delta Kappa Educational Foundation.

Stringfield, S. (1995). Attempting to enhance students' learning through innovative programs: The case for schools evolving into high reliability organizations. School Effectiveness and School Improvement, 6(1).

Teddlie, C., & Stringfield, S. (1993). Schools make a difference. New York: Teachers College Press.

Tomlinson, T. (Ed.). (1990). Hard work and high expectations: Motivating students to learn. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement.

U.S. Department of Education. (1987). What works: Research about teaching and learning. Washington, DC: Author.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

U.S.
DEPARTMENT
OF
EDUCATION

BEST COPY AVAILABLE